

WELFARE DISCOURSE AND THE POLICING OF IDLENESS :
A CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL ANALYSES OF THE WELFARE STATE

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS (Regulation 6.9)

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Title of Thesis WELFARE DISCOURSE AND THE POLICING OF IDLENESS : A CRITIQUE OF
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As an exercise in critical social theory, this thesis operates at a number of theoretical and practical levels. It offers a critique of the epistemological protocols which inform social theory and utilizes this critique to highlight the failure of radical discourse on the British Welfare State to free itself from the epistemological conditions of existence which inform traditional welfare discourse.

Social theory proceeds not through the appropriation of the objective world by way of a privileged methodological discourse which remains immune from its own strictures, but rather through the formulation, discursive redemption and reformulation of specific concepts. A radical discourse on the concept of the British Welfare State must discard recognised modes of historical analysis. Beginning with the concept of the British national economy as a determinate social formation, lines of continuity and discontinuity are identified in welfare discourse, through consideration of the concepts of the policing of idleness and relations of production.

Given the concept of relations of production (feudal; capitalist; socialist), it is argued that it has amongst its conditions of existence the concept of the policing of idleness, that is, the control, care and supervision of those agents who do not, or cannot, contribute to the production process (the aged; sick; infirm; unemployed; etc.). To talk of these concepts and their conditions of existence is not, however, to determine in advance the specificity of their form or their effectivity in a determinate social formation. These theoretical issues are illustrated through discussion of welfare discourse and the policing of idleness in terms of British feudal and capitalist relations and legislation on poor relief and the suppression of vagrancy. The continuity of the epistemological conditions of existence of welfare discourse within capitalist relations is illustrated through a comparison of Bentham's Panoptic Poor Plan and Robert Owen's discourse on labour discipline. But, it is argued, these discourses also show that epistemological, economic, legal, etc. conditions of existence do not determine the content or effectivity of discourse. This point is further illustrated through consideration of Friendly Societies and industrial welfare in the 19th century.

Finally, contemporary social work discourse is discussed in terms of its epistemological conditions of existence and it is argued that radical discourse on welfare and social work must fracture the continuity of those conditions if it is to offer a socialist discourse on welfare and the policing of idleness.

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Declaration

This thesis has been composed entirely by myself and is my own work.

Joseph H Curran
October 1982

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Joe Curran

CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

1. Critical Theory, Historical Analysis and the Critique of Epistemology

This thesis is an exercise in critical social theory. In substantive terms, it offers a radical critique of discourse on welfare and, more particularly, discourse on social work. The thesis seeks to explicate the form and effectivity of welfare discourse within the context of the British national economy based upon capitalist relations of production. In the final analysis, the thesis seeks to contribute to the socialist debate about the nature of welfare and welfare institutions in the context of capitalist relations of production and the place that that debate has in the wider struggle over the transformation of those relations of production to socialist relations.

Generally speaking, the liberal tradition of commentary on the British Welfare State has treated it, in historical terms, as an unqualified success: the rational culmination of British good sense and the evolution of civilisation. Fabian commentators have, ultimately, endorsed this view, identifying the Welfare State as a pragmatic solution to the conflict between labour and capital. Radical commentators, and particularly Marxist writers, have been far more ambivalent about the nature of 'welfare capitalism' seeing it at one and the same time as a reflection of the concessions won by the labour movement from capital and as a mechanism through which the 'working class' has been 'incorporated' and 'deradicalised'. In the

next chapter I shall review both radical and liberal discourses on welfare. The critique presented will be directed primarily towards radical theory, however, to highlight the failures in that discourse to move radically beyond the form of analysis offered by liberal theorists. Of necessity, then, some time must also be spent in reviewing liberal discourse. Hindess and Hirst have written of "... the weakness of the Left in this country, its lack of engagement with existing politics and political forces, its doctrinaire gesture politics, its lack of political theory ..." (1977:58) and have identified as a consequence "... the weakness of development of problems for theorisation". Whilst the effectivity of socialist political practice in the welfare realm depends on much more than the quality of its theoretical discourse, it will be argued that the failure of radical theorists to move beyond the parameters of welfare discourse set by liberal theorists has resulted in a degree of inertia which threatens to stultify socialist debate. This is very apparent in the social work realm which appears to offer a field of practice for socialists but within which theorists struggle to move beyond the terms created within liberal analysis.

The thesis, then, seeks to contribute to this debate about 'socialist welfare' and 'radical social work' and, in Chapter 7 some specific suggestions are made about the form that this debate might take. Primarily, however, the thesis concentrates upon the task of 'deconstructing' discourse on welfare and social work on the premise that radical theorists must acknowledge the limitations of

their present mode of formulation of problems in the welfare realm before they can begin the task of developing socialist discourse and practice in this field.

(i) Critical Social Theory. To claim that this thesis is an exercise in critical social theory is to locate it within a tradition of social analysis which takes its general concepts and form of enquiry from the works of Marx and in particular his critique of 19th century political economy and his analysis of 'the capitalist mode of production'. (1) This is not to argue that the discourse of the thesis is 'Marxist' or that Marx's basic concepts have been slavishly followed. Quite the reverse. Although theoretically and ideologically the thesis acknowledges its place within a particular intellectual and political tradition, it is argued that the work of critical social theory is an unending pursuit. Critical theory refuses the foreclosure and truncation of debate which is offered by traditional teleological forms of social analysis. ^{SPECIFY WHICH} This means that the work of Marx and Marxists must be subjected to rigorous analysis and in Chapter 3 the

1. Critical theory is perhaps more specifically associated with that brand of Marxist discourse associated with the Frankfurt School. The disparate works of theorists such as Marcuse, Adorno, Fromm and, later, Habermas could only, with difficulty, be presumed to provide a coherent framework for social analysis (Jay, 1973) and it will be clear from much that is written in subsequent chapters that the Hegelian Idealism which informs much of the work of this 'School' is rejected. Nevertheless, a great deal of current debate amongst radical social theorists owes much to the ideological impact which Marcuse has had and the influence of Habermas' work on this thesis is much deeper than can be reflected in the process of citation.

critique of radical theories on welfare and social work is continued and generalised as a critique of fundamental Marxist concepts and theories accepted unquestioningly by many radicals in the welfare field.

There are, I suggest, certain characteristics of the enterprise of critical theory which have both theoretically and ideologically informed the development of this thesis, although they have been modified and refined in that process. First, critical theory is both empirical and historical without, however, being reducible to scientism or historicism. Secondly, and related to the first, critical theory is practically orientated towards the general ideals of enlightenment and emancipation. Thirdly, what Derek Layder (1979:158) describes as the "ontological gulf" between human agency and social structure is a central problem for analysis within critical theory. Finally, integral to the examination of that issue and the related and perennial problems for social theory associated with the free-will/determinism debate, critical theory questions the very conditions of knowledge through a critique of epistemologies. It will be a major argument of this thesis that radical critics of liberal discourse on welfare have failed to offer a rigorous analysis of the epistemological premises of liberal discourse. By adopting the epistemological and methodological protocols of the discourses they seek to supplant, radical theorists have offered a merely gestural radicalism which leaves liberal discourse unscathed. In the remainder of this chapter, the broad features of a critique of

epistemology will be discussed and a framework for social analysis constructed on which the ensuing chapters will be based. I want to begin that process through a discussion of the problems surrounding the writing of historical analysis. An historical analysis of the current situation is largely taken for granted by radical theorists and most radical texts carry an obligatory chapter providing the 'historical background'. Unfortunately, this process is rarely theorised: historical chapters act as simple 'scene-setters', presenting the story-so-far. Much of this thesis could be read as yet another history of the development of the Welfare State. It is important, therefore, that the basis of such a 'history' be firmly understood. Historical analysis of the 'development of the Welfare State' is an integral element in both liberal and radical discourses on welfare and a critique of these discourses must tackle 'histories'. But it must also challenge the epistemological protocol which presents such 'histories' as the teleological revelation of objective facts, as the ineluctable unfolding of a continuity of events. Alternative 'histories' may well necessarily be generated only to be set to one side once consideration of the current situation is undertaken. As Foucault suggests in his discussion of historical discontinuity:

"The notion of discontinuity is a paradoxical one ... it enables the historian to individualize different domains but can be established only by comparing these domains". (1972:9)

(ii) Historical Analysis. Hindess and Hirst have written of their rejection of "... the notion of history as a coherent and worthwhile object of study" (1975:321). History is, they maintain, "... condemned by the nature of its object to empiricism" (ibid.:310). It is "... a potentially infinite text ... constantly being re-written" (ibid.:311). This critique of the historical enterprise appears in the concluding chapter to Hindess' and Hirst's Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production and is a necessary disclaimer that the text is about the historical development of capitalism. Their work is, as they note, an apparently "contradictory enterprise". It deals with historical concepts and yet professes anti-history (ibid.:308). The answer to the paradox is that the concluding chapter has to be read in the light of the text's introductory chapter which offers a radical critique of "theoretical empiricism". It is not until their self-styled "auto-critique" in 1977 that Hindess and Hirst refine their critique of empiricist and rationalist epistemologies and, as they acknowledge, there is a tension between the residual epistemology of their introduction and its complete rejection in terms of historical analysis in their concluding chapter. As a result, in the 1975 text, an unwarranted distinction appears to be drawn between social theory and historical analysis. The object of historical analysis is described as "whatever is past" which, by definition, "does not exist" (1975:309). The object of history is, then, that which represents what no longer exists. But to use this line of reasoning to argue away the object of history is to endorse

empiricism by default. The cogency of their critique only becomes apparent in the 1977 text when it is more forcefully argued that the objects of discourse are formed by and within discourse and are not concrete real objects awaiting empirical discovery. I shall return to that argument later. For the moment I want, briefly, to explore the epistemological problems surrounding historical analysis.

The work of the sociologist and that of the historian embody divergent traditions and professional and scientific ideological orientations and I would not wish to suggest that such differences lack consequences. The objects of both sociological and historical analysis, however, in an ^(a)otological sense, present the same kind of challenge and problem within these disciplines. (2) This can be illustrated through an examination of a paper by Paul Rock. (3)

Rock, whose major work is broadly within the field known as the sociology of deviance, is methodologically an individualist

2. In epistemological terms it is the appropriation of the object of study which presents parallel problems for both the sociologist and the historian. For Giddens, as social theorist,

"There simply are no logical or even methodological distinctions between the social sciences and history appropriately conceived". (1979:230)

For E.P. Thompson, as social historian,

"I must state plainly that in my view, when the materials are historical, there is no difference whatsoever in the methodology appropriate to the sociologist and to the social historian ..."
(1976:389. Emphasis in original.)

3. "Some problems of interpretative historiography" (1976).

and in his paper he acknowledges a debt to Alfred Schutz. Working within the tradition that is known generically as the geisteswissenschaften, Rock maintains that "... historical analysis must finally be construed as an attempt to capture the everyday reality of men" (1976:354). ⁽⁴⁾ If men construct their own social reality and if this reality can be studied only through the medium of those who construct it, it becomes quite clear why Rock should wish to argue that historical analysis is "phenomenologically impoverished and unsure" (ibid.). Just as Hindess and Hirst appeared to be arguing in their 1975 text, because one does not have direct access to the objects of history, historical analysis is a dead letter. Because, for Rock, the historian is "... unable to obtain any immediate access to the settings which he explores" (ibid.:355), the past is a series of "alien existential worlds" (ibid.). In the same way that Winch reasons that the sociologist is able to describe human action because he participates in that rule-governed activity, whilst the anthropologist is not similarly a part of an alien culture which he studies, Rock argues that the historian is denied access to the experiences which produced historical objects of analysis. ⁽⁵⁾

4. Discussing methodological individualism, Giddens provides the following quotation from Popper by way of illustration (1979:95). Popper holds that all social phenomena "... should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes etc. of human individuals". This would seem to be the stance taken by Rock in his paper.

5. See Winch's The Idea of a Social Science (1958) and his paper on "Understanding a primitive society" (1964).

Having created cultural and historical barriers, however, neither Winch nor Rock make it clear what it is that constitutes 'a culture' or 'the past'. As a result, their relativism of experience and human judgement could be applied within recognised cultural entities (can a middle class sociologist 'really' understand working class life?) and within relatively short time spans (can one generation 'really' understand another?). Such questions do, of course, pose very real problems for contemporary social analysts. (6)

Rock's position approximates to what Hindess and Hirst describe as a Kantian epistemology (1977:11). Central to the geisteswissenschaften tradition is the method of understanding (verstehen) of the object of analysis. Empathetic apprehension of the object of social enquiry demands that the social scientist has direct experience of the phenomenon in question. This rationalist epistemology requires the support of an empiricist epistemology for it is through direct experience and judgement that the scientist is able to appropriate the object in the process of knowledge formation. Thus, whilst Rock privileges two levels of discourse which designate the relationship between social scientist and the objective world of social facts as a relationship of

6. Rock, in fact, demands a standard of verification of historical knowledge that he is unlikely to demand for the sociologist when he writes that "... the historian cannot reassure himself that he knows all that there was to be known about a society. Neither can he be sure that documents and utterances were not intended to deceive ..." (1976:357).

'knowledge', it is the rationalist level which dominates his analysis. (7) The historian, for Rock, must be in a position to appreciate the "actor's world" (1976:355) and this can be achieved only through "an extraordinary feat of the imagination" (ibid.). To assist the historian, however, Rock finds a way of encapsulating the essential spirit of an age and preserving it over time and, thereby, leans even more heavily upon the legacy of Kantian 'categories' which informs his discourse. "Speech and writing", Rock suggests, "may give rise to some linguistic productions which are relatively autonomous ..." (1976:359).⁽⁸⁾ Historical analysis, then, as Hindess and Hirst were shown to have suggested, is the analysis of representations; primarily texts. Ultimately, however, Rock's suggestion that words can take on an "objectivity within a community" (ibid.:361) remains a statement of hope rather than a theorised hypothesis for, as he also records, "There are no practices by which interpretations of past writings can be shown to correspond with the intended and unintended

7. Such discourse is "privileged" in the sense that it designates the ground-rules which define what is and is not an object of knowledge and the methods through which such knowledge is to be achieved and verified as valid knowledge, but these discourses are not, themselves, open to a similar form of validation. If they were subjected to such a process this would simply result in the privileging of another body of discourse. (See Hindess' and Hirst's discussion of this issue, 1977:10 et seq.).

8. Epistemological protocols cannot be presumed to determine the content of discourse and it is clear that Rock finds it necessary to break out of his earlier view that history is a "virtually impossible object of enquiry". It would, he suggests "... be unprofitable to assume a priori that every cultural item is equally embedded" (1976:359).

meanings of their authors" (ibid.:362). It remains unclear why this is not equally a problem for the sociologist studying survey responses, documents and newspaper articles.

Having breached the ^{Delany} 'hermeneutic circle' he had created, Rock opens up the way for the more standard view that the present may be seen "as a moving synthesis of the past" with the past being "continually celebrated in the present" (ibid.). Thus, whilst Rock recognises the necessity of respecting the specificity and particular effectivity of determinate historical events ("The relegation of all experience to some universe of shared humanity hampers the recognition of what is peculiar to an event". Ibid.: 365), he effectively must endorse the traditional view of society as an evolving or unfolding of events through time. To the empiricist view of history, represented by the oft-quoted claim from Ranke that he did not wish to judge the past but merely to show "what really happened" (Meyerhoff, 1959:13), Rock adds the intermediate and refracting factor of the historian-interpreter. As sociologist, Rock's phenomenological approach conceived the social world as a process, created and recreated by the perceptions and actions of individuals. As historian, however, Rock finds that process petrified and his task merely an empirical act of description. But, in fact, the situation is the same for Rock as sociologist: his object of study is social beings, perceiving and acting. In that sense, Rock's epistemology differs little from the more open empiricism of someone like, say, Mandelbaum who begins his historical analysis from the a priori position "... that the

order to be found in nature and history as they are known by us may really characterize the events of the world independently of the mind's activity" (1967:203-4). (9) Mandelbaum, like Rock, was, however, very much aware of the teleological nature of those views of 'the past' which conceived it as a totality of meaning in a process of evolution or progressive unfolding. (10) Once the essential 'message', 'spirit' or 'motor-force' of history, or of an epoch within history, had been 'discovered' all events could be subordinated to its determination. Mandelbaum, like Rock, did, then, try to conceive of history in terms of discontinuity as well as continuity.

(iii) Historical Discontinuity

"... the grand sweep of events which we call historical process is made up of an indefinitely large number of components which do not form a completely inter-related set". (Mandelbaum, 1967:274)

Mandelbaum specifically refutes what he sees as earlier teleological and organismic philosophies of history. Although he talks in terms of causal relationships, he denies that reference is being made to any universal laws of causation and that his approach is determinist. In place of the layman's perception of history

9. Mandelbaum continues: "We shall not attempt to justify this assumption ...".

10. Under such conceptions, as Giddens notes, social change is treated as:

"... the progressive emergence of traits that a particular type of society is presumed to have within itself from its inception". (1979:223)

based on a model which sees causes as substances producing, in a temporal order, subsequent events, Mandelbaum substitutes what he calls a "scientific view" (1967:214 et seq.). For Mandelbaum, "events" in history are made up, or determined by, "sub-events". Their relationship he describes as one of "existential dependence". Sub-events are not conceived as the antecedents of events but as being contemporary with them. In a sense, then, Mandelbaum acknowledges that the events of historical analysis are the constructs of the historian and not concrete, real, objects. This is the substance of the statement by Hindess and Hirst that "History is not a real object, an object prior to and independent of thought, it is an object constituted within definite ideologies and discourses" (1975:318) and of that by Foucault when he describes discourse analysis as the study of "... practises that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972:36). I shall return to this point later. For the moment, it must be noted that the tension in Rock's paper between the structuring of the social world which allows continuity and, therefore, access to the past and the specificity of events as a function of the relativity engendered by individual actors, is also apparent in Mandelbaum's discourse. The fragmentation of the historical process which Mandelbaum seeks to conceptualise appears merely as the result of the phenomenological orientation of the historian. History is a matter of "concrete investigations" (1976:276), of "descriptive analysis"

which owes little to the "theoretical social sciences" (ibid.: 264). (11)

Both Rock and Mandelbaum offer a challenge to traditional and simplistic views of history as a rational and progressive continuity but at the price of importing, to a greater or lesser extent, a relativity which creates no boundaries against its inevitable logical regression. Having introduced a heuristic device through a change in the topographical metaphor of history, ⁽¹²⁾ Mandelbaum immediately switches to a view of history as a series of strata, loses a grip on the changed ^{a(c)} metaphor and, ultimately, presents a 6 modified linear conception of history. For a combination of the rejection of teleological, rational conceptions of history; Mandelbaum's search for a vertical conception of history; and Rock's emphasis upon the objectification of the social world as discourse, we must turn to the theoretical works of Michel Foucault.

11. Whereas Rock's philosophy of history closely resembles what Hindess and Hirst call the idealist historical school which conceives the method of "... interpretation of historical texts as understanding, the recreation of the spirit or cultural essence of a period or society through the meanings present in the representations of it which are still extant" (1975:309), that of Mandelbaum is basically empiricist. "Positivist historical method interprets representations by means of rules and procedures intended to determine the veracity of the record, to eliminate distortion and to read back through the record to the real conditions of which it is a representation" (ibid.).

12. In trying to conceive of history not in horizontal and evolutionary terms but as vertical and sedimented, Mandelbaum quotes Stern with approval: "... the total structure of history is to be understood as vertically stratified; not as a single linear connection of occurrences ... and also not as a set of independent historical unitary entities standing side by side ..." (Mandelbaum quoting Stern, 1976:287).

Whilst Rock's phenomenological perspective did not permit him seriously to consider that "... the consequences of actions chronically escape their initiators' intentions in processes of objectification" (Giddens, 1979:44), Foucault is intent upon exorcising the 'knowing subject' from his analysis of discourse. (13) In his The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception, (14) Foucault asks: "... is it inevitable that we should know of no other function for speech (parole) than that of commentary?" (1973:xvi). 'Commentary' attempts to get behind discourse to discover its 'real' or essential meaning. Idealist analysis sees discourse as representing the particular instance of a universal Truth: empiricist analysis treats discourse as the partial signification of the object-as-fact. In both cases, "... to comment is to admit by definition an excess of the signified over the signifier ..." (ibid.). 'Commentary' is the method of analysis of what Foucault calls, elsewhere, (15) "total history". (7) Such histories seek to "... reconstitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle - material or spiritual - of a society,

13. Although Foucault's work ultimately rests upon the empirical analysis of history and he has openly encouraged approaches to the analysis of discourse "... at different levels and with different methods" (1970:xiv), he specifically rejects the "phenomenological approach", noting that the historical analysis of discourse should not pursue "a theory of the knowing subject, but rather ... a theory of discursive practice" (ibid.).

14. The original French version was published in 1963 but the English language version translated by Sheridan Smith did not appear until 1973.

15. The Archaeology of Knowledge appeared in French in 1969 but was translated and published in English in 1972.

the significance common to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion ..." (1972:9). This continuity and organic totality has, Foucault argues, been challenged by a form of "general history" which "... speaks of series, divisions, limits, differences of level, shifts, chronological specificities ..." and which asks "... what form of relation may be legitimately described between these different series; what vertical system they are capable of forming ..." (ibid.:10).

Foucault takes as the metaphor which is to describe his philosophy of, and method for, historical analysis the practice of the archaeologist. (16) The metaphor induces the image of the historian excavating vertically through the fine sediments of history; some columns working ever downwards, others coming abruptly to an end. Nevertheless, although the metaphor is heuristic, Foucault's own epistemological approach is empiricist. Like other so-called 'reconstructive sciences' which attempt to study the pretheoretical structure of knowledge, for example, Chomsky's generative grammar and Habermas' human interests (McCarthy, 1978: 276), Foucault's study of discursive regularities is ultimately an exercise in empiricism, no matter how 'deep' the 'structure'.

"What counts in the things said by men", argues Foucault, "is not so much what they may have thought or the extent to which these things represent their thoughts, as that which systematizes them from the

16. The "Preface" to Madness and Civilization (French - 1961; English - 1967) speaks of an archaeology of history, but merely en passant (1967:xiii).

outset ..." (1973:xix). (17)

In studying the objects of discourse, the unities they form, their "discursive regularities", Foucault acknowledges that he is obliged to take them as they are "already given", for example, as psychopathology, medicine or social work (1972:26). As Burton and Carlen note, quoting Derrida: "the already there-ness of instruments and of concepts cannot be undone or re-invented" (1979:121). In the analysis of discourse, Foucault is concerned to understand "... how it is that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (1972:27). Foucault contrasts this enterprise to the analysis of language which studies the rules of usage and asks "... according to what rules could other similar statements be made?" (ibid.) and to the history of ideas which seeks to discover the structure behind rather than within discourse. What is important to discourse analysis is the attempt to "... restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence ..." (ibid.:28) and it is in this sense that the concept of discontinuity has its relevance, identifying as it does what Foucault describes as cracks in the geology of history (ibid.).

17. These words were written in 1963. Foucault's determinism remains apparent in later texts, however. In the "Foreword" to the English edition of The Order of Things (1970) Foucault writes:

"I do not wish to deny the validity of intellectual biographies ... it is simply that I wonder whether such descriptions are themselves enough ... I should like to know whether the subjects responsible for scientific discourse are not determined in their situation ... by conditions that dominate and even overwhelm them". (xiii-xiv)

Philp, who explicitly adopts the approach outlined by Foucault in The Order of Things, acknowledges his own text as being "... heavily determinist for it suggests that discourses constitute sites for subjects to speak and act from ..." (1979:104).

The exemplary text to illustrate Foucault's method of discourse analysis and the identification of discontinuities is The Order of Things. And yet, despite numerous claims to the contrary that text regresses into idealism, a charge that Marxist critics were quick to level (Sheridan, 1980:210), and into what Dews describes as a "powerful latent historicism" (1979:150). Foucault's intention, within the archaeological metaphor, was to excavate the discursive formations which constituted the knowledge of living beings, the laws of language and the knowledge of economic facts. This was to be what Foucault described as a "regional study" and was not a search for a Weltanschauung or the spirit of Classicism (1970:x). In the concept of the episteme, however, Foucault appears to find the universal organising principle of all discourse. Foucault describes his work in the following terms:

"... what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective form, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility ... Such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of that word, as an 'archaeology'" (1970:xxii).

(8)

The episteme, in effect, hegemonises discourse. As Foucault makes clear later in his text: "... there is always only one episteme

that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge ..."
 (1970:168). (18) There are, then, obvious tensions between
 the protocol which Foucault meticulously lays down for the analysis
 of discursive formations and Foucault's own discursive practice
 within his text. As Barry Hindess convincingly argues (1977b:223),
 however, it is not a sufficient critique of a body of discourse
 simply to examine the congruity between the internal relations of
 concepts and propositions of a discourse and the body of rules by
 which it purports to be governed. (9) The effectivity of Foucault's
 work depends upon more than such coherence and, in fact, this
 thesis relies heavily upon concepts generated in Foucault's work.
 (10) It will be a major contention in this thesis that orthodox Marxist
 political theory has little to contribute to the analysis of the
 ideological, cultural and legal conditions of existence of welfare
 discourse; as a consequence it is necessary to look elsewhere for
 a range of concepts which can begin the task of a radical (11) critique
 in that realm. In the sub-section which follows I shall briefly
 describe Foucault's historical analysis and its utilization of the
 concept of the episteme.

18. That Foucault's work is a contribution to what has already been
 described as the reconstructive sciences can be seen from his
 discussion of the 'deep structure' of the episteme. The episteme
 represents a "middle region" between the "fundamental codes of a
 culture" and its scientific and philosophical discourses and is "the
 most fundamental of all". The episteme represents the culturally
 embedded nature of man's relationship with, and awareness of, the
 order of the objective world. It is "... the pure experience of
 order and of its modes of being" (1970:xx-xxi).

(iv) The Concept of the Episteme. In general, historians would appear to proceed much in the way described by E.P. Thompson in his Whigs and Hunters. The historian 'parachutes' into the unknown territory of 'the past' "... at first knowing only a few yards of land around [him] ... and gradually extending [his] ... explorations in each direction" (1975:16). Foucault, however, begins with a body of discourse and explores its limits, the space that it occupies, and refuses the continuities offered, for example, between 18th century discourse on wealth and 19th century economic thought. In a number of his texts, Foucault outlines a series of fractures in the epistemological framework of Western culture which describe discontinuities between the Middle Ages and the Classical age (generally around the mid 17th century) and the Classical and the Modern age (generally around the end of the 18th century) (1970: xxii). (19) Until the inauguration of the Classical age, Foucault observes, resemblance played a primary role in knowledge (ibid.:17). Resemblance operated at two levels. The objects of the world were believed to be linked in an unbroken chain through similitude. These similitudes could, however, only be identified through external

19. These discontinuities appear in empirical studies by Foucault of mental illness (Madness and Civilization - 1967); The Birth of the Clinic - 1973; and The Order of Things - 1970. Foucault is said to view his later publication - Discipline and Punish - 1977, as marking a new phase in his work, in particular his more explicit use of the concept of power. Sheridan records that Foucault put aside his archaeological metaphor around 1971 (1980:116) and Dews notes Foucault's acceptance of the limitations of the concept of the episteme (1979:150). Discipline and Punish certainly does not openly work with these concepts and yet the episteme remains implicit. Foucault's more recent use of the concept of 'genealogy' to describe his historical analysis seems a less powerful metaphor for his desire to move beyond traditional modes of writing history.

signs. Foucault provides the example of the walnut which it was believed could cure headaches (1970:27). Within the Renaissance episteme, it was believed that walnut and brain bore similar properties, the identity of which was a mystery, the 'reality' of which was evidenced, however, by the similarity between the convolutions of the brain and the walnut. From the mid-seventeenth century, this ternary relationship between the subject and object of knowledge (sign; similitude; signified) gave way to a binary system of signification (Foucault, 1970:42).

It is, of course, something of a truism to observe that there was a fundamental change in the form of knowledge in the 17th century and Descartes is usually identified with this change (Carr, 1965:134; Flew, 1971:275). The so-called Cartesian doubt raised the fundamental question of whether and how anything can be known about the world (Flew, 1971:282).⁽²⁰⁾ For Descartes, though objects in the world were real and concrete, human fallibility meant that objects could be misconstrued. The Classical episteme is, then, characterised by representationism based upon the ability to measure and classify the 'primary qualities' of the objective world. Descartes' principles of method dictate not simply the way in which objects are to be appropriated as knowledge but, rather, how those objects are formed through division and ordering in knowledge (Foucault, 1970:54 et seq.). Within the Classical episteme the relationship between sign and signified is one of representation.

20. As Habermas notes, the fundamental problem of knowledge has always been: "... how is reliable knowledge possible" (1978:3).

As a consequence it was possible to conceive of a unified and finite corpus of knowledge.

The outer-limit of the Classical period is identified by Foucault towards the end of the eighteenth century. Destutt de Tracy's emphasis, within his 'science of ideas', upon the veracity of sense impressions and Kant's critique of representation itself mark the ending of the Classical epistemological framework. (21) Consequently, a unified corpus of knowledge was now questionable: the a priori sciences became separable from the a posteriori empirical disciplines (Foucault, 1970:246). For Habermas, epistemology subsequently ceased to operate as the critique of knowledge. Prior to the Kantian critique:

"Theories of knowledge did not limit themselves to the application of scientific method - they did not merge with the philosophy of science" (1978:3).

With the Modern episteme, representations become the mere surface appearances of objects which have "organic structures", internal relationships linked by their own complexity of laws (Foucault, 1970: 218). The knowledge process, then, becomes one of refining methods

21. Descartes' 'solution' to the problem of knowledge illustrates well the form of knowledge which Foucault characterises as the Classical episteme.

"... God in creating me put this idea in me as the mark of the workman imprinted on his work; and furthermore, it is not necessary that this mark should be something different from the work itself". (Quoted by Flew, 1971:285).

For Kant, however, the logical apparatus of concepts and principles could not be based within representation but must be prior to it. Kant, in effect, replaced Descartes' transcendent metaphysics with an immanent metaphysics of the transcendental.

for the discovery of these inner-laws and their translation.

True knowledge becomes identified with science and the positivism of its practice and, as Foucault says, a unity of knowledge is sought through the mathematicization of the empirical disciplines (1970:246). Knowledge and Human Interests is Habermas' attempt to retrace the growing ascendancy of positivism and to restore the critical element to epistemology.

Describing the critical element of epistemology, Habermas writes: "The only thing standing at the beginning of critique is the radical project of unconditional doubt" (1978:13). Habermas begins his review by considering Hegel's critique of Kant. Critical philosophy demands that the knowing subject should submit to reflection the conditions of knowledge of which it is capable. Such a demand does, of course, lead to an infinite regress which is the general condition of the specific hermeneutic circle with which Rock has struggled. As Habermas concludes: "Every consistent epistemology is caught in this circle from the beginning" (ibid.:7). The critique of knowledge, then, "... does not possess the spontaneity of an origin" (ibid.:8). For Hegel, Kant's critical philosophy embodies what is known as the organon theory of knowledge. Within such a framework, critical philosophy directs attention towards the means of knowledge and postulates knowledge as mediated either through an instrument which forms the objective world or through a medium which refracts knowledge of that world. Hegel is then able to reason that the task of critical philosophy, that is, the ascertainment of the functions of the instrument or medium and

therefore their influences, is superfluous. But, as Habermas argues, Hegel's critique depends upon his own presuppositions about the Absolute and upon his interpretation of critical philosophy as supposing that the organon of knowledge represents a subjective interference in the knowledge process. In fact, for critical philosophy, the organon "... produces the world within which reality can appear at all ..." (1978:12). Hegel, then, reveals the presuppositions of Kantian critical philosophy - to know that knowledge is constructed through an organon is to already know something about the knowing subject - but merely substitutes the concept of an absolute knowledge against which subjective knowledge might be compared.

For Habermas, the important contrast between Cartesian and Kantian philosophy and subsequent thought is the fact that, for the former, 'radical doubt' required no formal legitimation within a wider methodology because it was methodic in the sense that consciousness constituted itself through its critical functioning. Subsequently, however, radical doubt has been replaced by methodology which demands justification through the formality of a scientific practice. Epistemology which acknowledged the problematic nature of what Hindess and Hirst call the privileging of levels of discourse has been replaced by what Habermas calls scientism, that is, "science's belief in itself" (1978:4).

Hegel's objective idealism is a materialist philosophy in the sense that he draws attention to the phenomenological experience of the individual mind in relation to the absolute Mind. There is,

then, at this point a further coincidence with Foucault's conception of the inauguration of the Modern episteme, for as he records: "Before the end of the eighteenth century, man did not exist ..." (1970:308). With the Modern episteme Man becomes what Foucault calls that "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" (ibid.:318): Man is both object and subject of knowledge. Thus, in his analysis of the discursive regularities of life, wealth and discourse, Foucault describes the discontinuity at the turn of the 19th century which witnessed the incorporation within those regularities of the new conception of Man: "... since it is he who speaks, since he is seen to reside among the animals ... [and is the] ... means of all production" (ibid.:313). And yet Man is determined by these regularities and can be known only through his words, his organism and his artefacts.

"... and he, as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already, in a necessarily subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words which exist before him" (1970:313).

It is this objectification of Man through self-consciousness which Hegel sees as alienation (self-estrangement) and which he sought to supersede in his dialectic of History. Marx's meta-critique is the attempt to overcome the philosophy of identity which German Idealism had developed in reaction to Kant (Marx, in McLellan, 1978:96-109).

Modern thought, then, can be characterised: by its attempt "to traverse an ontological gulf" (Layder, 1979:158) between subject and object; agency and structure; base and superstructure; by the

desire to reveal that otherness of Man - his alienated nature or his unconscious self - by pouring light into the dark recesses of his History and his Nature. Modern thought is the attempt to reveal "... the inexhaustible double that presents itself to reflection as the blurred projection of what man is in his truth ..." (Foucault, 1970:327). Having once posited the essentially alienated character of human existence, discourse must identify the force which determines that existence. To God, Society, the Absolute and the superego can be added Marx's concept of the mode of production. It is for this reason that Foucault can declare that: "At the deepest level of Western knowledge, Marxism introduced no real discontinuity; it found its place without difficulty ..." (1970:261). (22)

From within the matrix of the Modern episteme, the social sciences emerge. The Order of Things is subtitled An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, those discursive regularities excavated by Foucault - biology, economics and philology - are not, however, the human sciences in question. (23) The human, or social, sciences emerge from the "... vicinity, on the immediate frontiers, and along the whole length of those sciences that deal with life, labour and language" (1970:351). There is, then, within the configuration of the episteme a specificity to the social sciences which is not always immediately obvious for the other discourses studied in that text.

22. Habermas writes that, ultimately "Marx reduces the process of reflection to the level of instrumental action" (1978:44), blurring the distinction between natural science and critique. Marxists subsequently have simply endorsed positivism through crude economic materialism.

23. This is not revealed until Foucault's final chapter (p.344 et seq.).

Subsequent chapters will look in more detail at this specificity for it will be argued that welfare discourse reflects the practical application of the social sciences. For the moment, however, concentration remains with the general application of the concept of the episteme.

Foucault's epistemei sit comfortably with other efforts directed towards the compartmentalisation of 'the past' into epochs, although his claim not to be writing a history of ideas is noted. The analysis of discourses on living things, on wealth and on language are general histories and yet the text leads us through the apparently progressive stages of the Renaissance, Classical and Modern epistemei and it sets this process within the wider determinant of the episteme in general. Nevertheless, though parallels may be drawn with both Rock's and Mandelbaum's problematisations of historical analysis - for example, like Rock, Foucault seems to warn against the glib translation of one existential world in terms of another and, like Mandelbaum, he makes empirical selections from the complex of history but fails to explain those selections and the epistemological stance which makes them possible - Foucault does avoid the historical perspective which compares that enterprise to looking through the wrong end of a telescope. Reversing the telescope, the historian gazes into 'the past': the greater the distance, the smaller and more blurred the image appears. In a sense, Foucault gives each episteme equal intellectual effort and does not relegate earlier epistemei to the thin end of the telescope. Each episteme must be appreciated for the

general form it provides for a variety of discourses and for the limits it places on the contents of those regularities.

Foucault reveals the epistemological conditions of determinate bodies of discourse (medicine; economics; the social sciences; penology). Within the Modern episteme, for example, he argues that the conceptualisation of Man as both constitutive of, and constituted by, History is both a condition of existence of social science discourse and provides it with its object of analysis. As such, social science represents "... both knowledge and a modification of what it knows, reflection and a transformation of the mode of being of that on which it reflects. Whatever it touches it immediately causes to move ..." (1970:327). (24) Attempts to close this whirlpool of analysis, to reveal the Same in the dark corners of the Other, lead both to the positivistic search for origins in Man's nature and in the history of his culture and to the search for the motor-force of development of that nature and that history. But, as has been underlined, the discourse which attempts such analyses must somehow stand outside of the process analysed: it must operate on a privileged level. Such a discourse of Truth, Foucault maintains, leads to positivism in which "... the truth of the object determines the truth of the discourse ...", or to eschatology in which "... the truth of the discourse constitutes the truth in formation ..." (1970: 320). This formulation parallels Hindess' and Hirst's discussions of empiricist and rationalist epistemologies (1977) and will be

24. Elsewhere, Foucault speaks of "... the strange units of sociology and psychology which since their appearance have not ceased to start afresh ..." (1978:9).

utilized in the following chapter to show that, in terms of epistemological conditions, liberal and radical commentaries on the Welfare State operate on similar premises. Foucault, then, offers his own form of critique of knowledge and yet his own epistemological framework is never clearly explicated. In the next sub-section this point will be taken up and the framework for this thesis will be discussed.

(v) Epistemology and Ontology. Dews has noted that whilst Foucault's work is directed towards the study of the 'will to truth', Foucault has always sidestepped a direct discussion of the epistemological issues of 'true' knowledge (Dews, 1979:147-9). As a result, Foucault's discourse replaces the pessimism embodied in Weber's ineluctable process of rationalisation with the pessimistic portrayal of history as the aleatory trajectory described by competing forces. (25) Nevertheless, given the demands of a radical project of unconditional doubt, Foucault's work offers a critical theory of the 'will to truth' which refuses the luxury of any absolute foundations in contrast to the work of an avowed critical theorist, Habermas, who seeks to anchor the "will to reason" in the

25. Foucault's conception of the episteme which defines the conditions of possibility of knowledge has similar effects to Althusser's and Balibar's conception of mode of production as a structured totality: transitions from one episteme to another and from one mode of production to another become logically implausible. (For Althusser and Balibar, see Hindess and Hirst, 1975, especially Chapter 6.). Foucault has to surmise "... an erosion from outside ..." the culture in question (1970:50). In effect, he brackets-out the problem - "... perhaps it is not yet time to pose this problem ..." (ibid.) and simply accepts "... discontinuities in the simultaneously manifest and obscure empirical order wherever they posit themselves" (ibid.:51).

deep structure of the species (human interests) (1978:314). But what are the consequences for political discourse of Foucault's nihilism? During 1968, Foucault was questioned directly on this issue by the editors of Esprit:

"Doesn't a thought which introduces discontinuity and the constraint of a system into the history of the mind remove all basis for a progressive political intervention? Does it not lead to the following dilemma:
 - either the acceptance of the system,
 - or the appeal to an uncontrolled event, to the irruption of exterior violence which alone is capable of upsetting the system?" (Foucault, 1978:8).

Foucault's reply is unlikely to have satisfied his critics; its adjacency to the events in Paris in May 1968 make his views particularly interesting however. Sheridan suggests that the 'failure' of those disturbances should have come as no surprise to the apostle of discontinuities, for whom the State was no mere central mechanism which could simply be 'taken-over' (1980:113). What Foucault emphasises in his reply are his long-term objectives to rid radical critique of its glib solutions. He emphasises the specificity of determinate bodies of discourse which cannot be subsumed by a universal theory of historical development. Foucault's task is "the individualization of discourses" (1978:8) and "the analysis of different types of transformation" (ibid.:11).

Towards the end of his reply, Foucault turns to the relation between political practice and the discursive regularities he has studied and notes that the essential point to understand is not that political practices influence consciousnesses and, thereby the form

and content of discourses but, rather, that political practices transform "the mode of existence of ... discourse" (1978:21).

What are modified are the "rules of formation" of discourses but such "... changes are not arbitrary nor 'free': they operate in a realm which has its own configuration and which consequently does not offer limitless possibilities of modification" (ibid.:23).

Foucault, then, is offering from the midst of his often esoteric work a very practical warning: political practice can influence the content of specific bodies of discourse through awareness of their conditions of formation but the effectivity of that influence cannot be legislated for in advance. Finally, inter alia, Foucault asserts that a "... progressive politics does not consider that discourses are the result of mute processes or the expression of a silent consciousness; but rather that ... they form a practice which is articulated upon ... other practices" (ibid.:24). In this and other respects I want to suggest that Foucault's enterprise has much in common with the work of Hindess and Hirst and their collaborators. Hindess and Hirst, for instance, suggest that - "In political practice the conditions of calculation of effectivity and of the production of effect are not separable. Political practice involves the calculation of effect, of the possibilities and results of political action, and that calculation rests on political relations which condition the degrees of certainty of calculation and the range of the calculable" (1977:59). But in making such a statement, Hindess and Hirst are not merely repeating the Marxist liturgy that theory only gains credence through practice. For

Hindess and Hirst, calculation cannot be privileged by the appellation of 'knowledge' because their critique of epistemology requires the rejection of any conception of knowledge as the process of appropriation of the objects of discourse as concrete objects (ibid.:7).

As I have already tried to suggest in earlier sub-sections, once a social theorist begins to examine the epistemological conditions of his or her claims to knowledge and the ontological status of the subject and object of that process, then it becomes clear that a form of discourse is developed which necessarily ends in the bracketing-out of certain problematic issues. In general, epistemologies postulate a realm of objects (the real, concrete world) and a knowing subject which, with the benefit of specific faculties (perception; experience; judgement) and methods (observation; contemplation; measurement), can appropriate, to a greater or lesser extent, the reality of that realm of objects. As Hindess and Hirst put it, epistemology conceives of the relationship between discourse and object as one of both a distinction and a correlation (1977:10). Within epistemology, certain ontological statements have to be made about the nature of the real world (that it exist in the form in which knowledge appropriates it or that it is formed to a greater or lesser extent by the process of knowledge) and about the nature of the knowing subject (that it has certain genetic or acquired faculties for knowledge). But any epistemology must claim to "... already know more than it can know according to its own stated premises" (Habermas, 1978:12). For how can knowledge about,

(16) for example, the ontological status of the knowing subject be verified except by reference to that very ontological status? As already suggested, the premises of positivism have largely ignored these logical problems of verification, placing faith almost entirely in sense-experience. However:

"The circularity and ultimate dogmatism of all epistemological conceptions should be evident since there can be no demonstration that such-and-such forms of discourse are indeed privileged except by means of forms of discourse that are themselves held to be privileged". (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:13-14)

Rejection of this dogmatism means that the validity and effectivity of a discourse cannot be measured by reference to objects existing outside of discourse. In endorsing this position it is necessary to say, with Hindess and Hirst, that "The question of the 'reality of the external world' is not the issue ... Objects of discourse do not exist. The entities discourse refers to are constituted in it and by it" (1977:19-20).

There are numerous forms of discourse and they may be subjected to critique according to the concepts they utilize and the relations they postulate between those concepts. It is not, however, legitimate to calculate their effectivity on the basis of other forms of discourse or according to the dogma of epistemologies. This thesis is an exercise in theoretical discourse which Hindess and Hirst define as "... the construction of problems for analysis and solutions to them by means of concepts" (ibid.:7). Concepts specify objects within discourse. To say this, is to reject empiricist

epistemologies claiming that concepts are direct representations of the objective world and rationalist epistemologies claiming that concepts represent the essence of the real world. The process of construction of theoretical discourse proceeds in the following manner: a general concept, such as capitalist relations of production, implies other particular concepts, for example, capitals and labour, and relations between concepts, for example, forms of law which define the status and activity of capitals and labour and the relationship between them (contracts of employment, for example). In this process, capitalist relations of production specify, in a general form, other concepts but they do not determine those other concepts. Theoretical consideration of the forms of law under capitalist relations of production may well lead to a reformulation of the concepts of capitals and labour and of capitalist relations of production. Hindess and Hirst describe the effects in discourse which are the consequences of specifying determinate concepts as the "conditions of existence" of those concepts (1977:25-6). Thus, the concept of capitalist relations of production has, as its conditions of existence, economic agents occupying the positions of capitals with effective possession of, and control over, the means of production, and labour which is effectively separated from ownership and control of those means. These economic agents and their relationship have conditions of (17) existence in forms of culture and law which define and police those statuses and relationships. Specification of determinate relations of production results in specification of the general form of other

concepts (political; legal; cultural; economic): it does not determine those forms or their specific content. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this has implications for a radical theory of the Welfare State because the specification of the British national economy as a social formation ⁽²⁶⁾ with capitalist relations of production ⁽²⁷⁾ does not, ipso facto, specify the form taken by what I shall be calling the policing of idleness (the care, supervision and regulation of those agents not within the workforce - children; the disabled; the unemployed; the aged) and it does not specify the content of that discourse. ⁽²⁸⁾ 18

2. Concluding Discussion

gou The mere declaration that the security offered by epistemological protocols is being rejected is no guarantee that their effects will be erased from a piece of theoretical discourse.

"These conditions", declare Hindess and Hirst, "are not easy to

26. A "... social formation ..." is "an object of discourse in which the conditions of existence of determinate relations of production are secured" (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:26).

27. The concept of relations of production is used rather than mode of production because the latter suggests that a social formation is a structured totality defined and determined by an 'economic system'; in effect, 'social formation' becomes synonymous with 'mode of production'.

28. Hindess and Hirst write: "Legal and political apparatuses and cultural and ideological forms provide the forms in which the conditions of existence of determinate relations of production are secured, but they are not reducible to their effects and they are not organised into definite structural levels which merely reflect ... an underlying economic base" (1977:57).

satisfy ..." (1977:24). In this thesis I shall be attempting to step outside of a sociological mode of analysis which nevertheless insists at every juncture to provide me with its concepts, its epistemologies and its meta-language. Foucault has written that The Order of Things "... may have given the impression that ... analyses were being conducted in terms of cultural totality. It is mortifying", he continues, "that I was unable to avoid these dangers: I console myself with the thought that they were intrinsic to the enterprise itself, since, in order to carry out its task, it had first to free itself from these various methods and forms of history ..." (1972:16-7). The effectivity of a body of discourse depends upon much more than the loyalty it maintains to its protocol of formation. In his "discourse theory of truth" (McCarthy, 1973:141-8; 1978:291 et seq.; Habermas, 1970; 1976b) Habermas suggests discursive practice works on the premise of an "ideal speech situation" in which there is a willingness to arrive at a rationally grounded agreement. Under such an 'arrangement', all privileging of discourses according to epistemological or other criteria of authority is suspended and discourse is conducted according to the "unforced force of the better argument" (McCarthy, 1978:292). A body of discourse has its own conditions of existence and it is an explicit ideological premise of this thesis that theoretical discourse ought to proceed in terms of approximation to an ideal communication situation. This is a reflection of the political and ideological orientation of the theoretical work of this

thesis, for the aims of increased socialisation (29) and democratisation of social relations are the conditions of an ideal communication situation.

The selection of specific concepts is the result of theoretical, ideological and political calculation. Hindess and Hirst acknowledge, for example, that the discourse of Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production began with concepts developed by Marx and Engels and did not investigate the generation of those concepts (1977:40). Their collaborative work subsequently has begun just such an investigation (Cutler et al, 1977 and 1978). The results of my critique of radical discourse on the Welfare State suggest that basic Marxist concepts have little to contribute to discourse on welfare and the policing of idleness and it is for this reason that, in later chapters, I shall utilize concepts derived from Foucault's work. (30) In particular, I shall be attempting to link Foucault's concepts of the epistemei of the Middle Ages, the Classical and the Modern period to the Marxist concepts of feudal and capitalist relations of production and the transformation from the former to the latter. The effectivity of such work resides not in the 'accuracy' with which history is read but in what it can say about relationships between determinate conceptions of social formation, relations of production and their cultural, legal, ideological or

29. Hirst defines socialisation as "... the conversion of activities and resources to a public or communal property form, the administration and distribution of activities and resources in non-commodity forms" (1980:79).

30. Primarily The Order of Things and Discipline and Punish.

political conditions of existence. As the analysis of discourses on welfare and the policing of idleness, attention is drawn in the thesis to what I have called the epistemological conditions of existence of those discursive regularities, that is, broadly the ideological, cultural and theoretical conditions by which they are governed, validated and achieve legitimacy. Emphasis is given to epistemological conditions because the thesis offers a critique of welfare discourse which operates as a science of welfare. Some attention is also given to the legal conditions of existence of those discourses.

What is offered in this thesis is the attempt to bring into radical discourse on welfare and social work a series of new concepts, a radically new mode of analysis and a meta-language which seeks to break from the social science framework which is already intimately integrated into that welfare discourse. "Theoretical work", however, "proceeds by constant problematisations and reconstructions" (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:7). It is not claimed that this work offers a clear and final break with existing discourses on welfare but, rather, that it may begin a new and more rigorous critique of that body of discourse.

At the most general level, the thesis works with the concept of the British national economy as a social formation. In more particular terms, interest will be centred upon the direct economic agents of production within the social formation, that is, the labour force and, specifically, the thesis will concentrate upon what I describe as the policing of idleness as it is manifested as a condition

of existence of the concepts of national labour force and the conditions of existence of its regulation.

CHAPTER 2

Liberal and Radical Theories of the Welfare State :
A Critique of Essentialism

1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was argued that discourse which establishes veracity and effectivity in terms of epistemological presuppositions about the ontological status of the objective world and its appropriation as knowledge, must be rejected in terms of its logical inconsistency. Discourses were not, therefore, challenged on the basis of their relative success in appropriating or reflecting the real world; they were not condemned as being 'merely' ideological. Protocols, such as empiricist and rationalist epistemologies, which establish the terms on which 'true' knowledge can be based, effectively bracket-out of consideration the verification of those terms which are thereby given privileged status. In this chapter, a critique of liberal and radical discourses on the Welfare State is given which is based upon an analysis of the coherence and consistency of those discourses. As a critique of the protocols through which they claim coherence and veracity it must be noted that little can be said about the effectivity of these discourses. It is clear, for example, that radical critiques of liberal discourse in the realm of welfare and social work have had a growing influence over the last decade both amongst academic commentators and practitioners in welfare organisations. But it will be maintained that the failure of radical critiques to free themselves from the epistemological conditions which inform liberal discourses has serious

implications for socialist political practice in the welfare realm. The ideal communication situation, which is a premise of socialist discourse, is consistently ignored by radical commentary which seeks to privilege its theoretical work as the 'scientific' analysis of the laws and historical tendencies of 'capitalist' development. (2)

To claim that liberal and radical discourses share epistemological presuppositions is not to argue away any relevant and effective differences between them. These two bodies of work have been deliberately selected for analysis because, despite their similarities, they are different. In terms of their respective conditions of existence, in political and ideological terms for example, there are important contrasts. Radical commentators seek fundamental changes in the social relations they study: their liberal counterparts are much more content with existing relations whilst acknowledging that 'progress' may be necessary in certain limited realms. This is not, however, to endorse the view that radical political discourse is 'revolutionary', in contrast to the reformism of liberal politics. Important changes in the working and living conditions of individuals cannot be relegated as mere placatory reforms. Of equal importance, however, "Reforms are not reformist if they create new grounds for struggle and new sources of strength" (Hirst, 1979:17). Both radicals and liberals may often find that they are working for similar short-term and practical aims and radicals should avoid the temptation to claim superiority of purpose through radical posturing and the exegesis of Marxist texts.

The nomenclature of 'liberal' and 'radical' has been adopted in preference to apparently more precise descriptions. It is not suggested that this chapter is an attempt to provide a concise overview of discourse on welfare such as may be found in the classification offered in George and Wilding (1976). (1) Anti-collectivists such as Hayek (1960) or Raison (1965) accept that welfare cannot be guaranteed through earnings or wealth but seek to meet need through the 'private sector', in a commodity form. The liberal and radical discourses discussed in this chapter are opposed to such a form and the concern of this thesis is the understanding of discourses which seek to establish a non-commodity form of organisation and administration of welfare services. Whilst liberal discourse may see this as its major project, radical discourse directs attention to ways of increasing the democratic control and operation of such services. In addition, commentators who adopt a more precise classification of theoretical discourses on welfare base their categorisations on theoretical and methodological perspectives which are often taken as indicators of the political and ideological orientation of the discourses in question. Underlying similarities of the epistemological and ontological premises, in turn, are ignored. Gough, for example, regards the major weakness of existing theoretical discussion about the Welfare State to be its over-reliance on either a functionalist or an action-orientated analysis (1978; 1979). For Gough, the power of theoretical

1. Ideology and Social Welfare. George and Wilding discuss the "anti-collectivist"; "reluctant collectivist"; "Fabian Socialist"; and "Marxist" perspectives.

discourse resides in its ability to reflect the structural and the subjective aspects of the social world. Social administration, for Gough, is particularly ineffective, ⁽²⁾ gaining acceptance by default through the failure of other perspectives to provide a "theoretical synthesis". Thus, whilst writers such as Gough and Mishra, who classifies social administration under the "empiricist school" (1977:3-19) are well aware of the political influence which social administration has had since the beginning of the century, particularly through association with the Fabian Society, ⁽³⁾ they tend to direct their critiques of such discourses against their supposed scientific and methodological inadequacies.

Gough, then, simply side-steps the task of subjecting existing discourses to a critique by accepting in principle functionalist and 'action' theories. All he offers is a project for their synthesis: a synthesis of "objective" and "subjective" "elements" in "the historical process" (1979:10). Similar attempts to bridge this "ontological gulf" will be discussed later in this chapter; for the moment the point to note is that a nomenclature based upon

2. The view that social administration is atheoretical is particularly prevalent. For its critics, both inside and outside the discipline, this is a fault often to be rectified through the importation of sociological theories and methods (Warham, 1973:194; Pinker, 1976:5).

3. Founded in 1884, the Fabian Society adopted a deliberate policy of gradualism and permeation of existing institutions as a peaceful means of engineering social change. Beatrice Webb's self-confessed "use" of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws illustrates the strategic use of 'facts' to support a political doctrine. Mrs Webb is said to have seen her work with the Royal Commission as "more or less engineering the evidence in my direction" (Cormack, 1953:29-30; and see Donnison, 1972 and Bruce, 1978).

theoretical or methodological frameworks is rejected. It will be suggested that distinctions drawn between functionalist and 'action' perspectives and between these and structuralist interpretations of the social world are often vacuous. (4) Using the amorphous classification of 'radical' and 'liberal' to label the political and ideological standpoint of the texts in question, discourses will be reviewed to disclose their essentialist premises.

2. A Critique of Essentialism

Hindess and Hirst have described essentialism as:

"... a philosophical and ideological mode of analysis in which determinate real phenomena are 'explained' by reference to the essence ... that they are held to express" (1975:9).

In a later text, in which Hindess is less inclined to imply that the charge of essentialism is the charge of being non-scientific, he suggests that essentialism is "... a mode of analysis in which social phenomena are analysed not in terms of their specific conditions of existence and their effects with regard to other social relations and practices but rather as the more or less adequate expression of an essence" (1977b:95).

4. A great deal of effort on the part of sociologists in the West has, of course, been directed towards the very task of synthesising the "two sociologies" as Dawe has described functionalism and action theory (1971:550-1). Parsons' work since his The Structure of Social Action in 1937 has been directed towards that goal, resulting in work which Gouldner suggests has "... influenced and captured the attention of academic sociologists ... throughout the world" (1972:168; and see Giddens, 1979:50).

(i) History as the Search for Origins. Historical analyses, like all great voyages of discovery, are invariably searches for origins and sources. The teleological, rationalist or idealist versions of a 'total' history portray historical development as the working out of some absolute purpose; the realisation of the destiny of a privileged race or culture; the programmed evolution of a species; the perfection of civilisation; the progress of knowledge. Under such signs, 'the past' is searched for significant milestones; for moments of birth; for continuities of cause and effect. Each significant moment registers the essence, a fragment, of the motor-force of the historical process. Histories of the 'development' of the British Welfare State invariably identify empirical signposts which embody the essential character of that development. Thus, whilst the process may be broadly portrayed as one of increasing rationalisation and the progress of Society, this may be condensed in the form of a series of government reports, statutes or, perhaps, public scandals. For example, the Family Allowances Act of 1945 may be shown as the 'inevitable' end result of a process typified by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration of 1904; the establishment of a school meals service in 1906 and a school health service in 1907; along with the wider campaign to reduce infant mortality. Beveridge described his scheme for a national insurance as "... in some ways a revolution but in more important ways it is a natural development from the past" (quoted by Fraser, 1978:200). For someone like Titmuss, however, such a process requires a catalyst. Conditions of war were felt by Titmuss often to

ignite the basic altruistic nature of Man: "It was the South African War ...", he wrote, "that touched off the personal health movement which led eventually to the National Health Service in 1948". (1976:80).

A number of introductory texts to the British Welfare State carry in their titles the essentialist notions of their discourse. (5) But such 'origins' are never sought with the tenacity demanded by the logic of the protocol. Seed writes humorously about "pseudo-historians" who attempt to trace social work back to the Acts of the Apostles, Plato and Aristotle (1973:ix-x). But his claim to be substituting an understanding of "... the historical background to events and traditions from which there is evidence that ideas about modern social work developed ..." for earlier histories which simply claimed a "... piece of history as belonging to modern social work" (ibid.:x), merely substitutes an idealist essentialism for an essentialism of the object. An object of discourse - contemporary social work - is represented in discourse, in its essence, before it has appeared in its reality. In searching for the protoplast, history is viewed through the wrong end of the telescope with the consequence that the more original the protoplasm the more diluted is the essence. Seed, then, begins his history in "Tudor times"; Fraser begins his in the late eighteenth century. The demand to at least gaze into the blurred image of ^{NO} primitive origins is, however,

5. For example: Bruce, The Coming of the Welfare State (1961) and The Rise of the Welfare State (1973); Fraser, The Evolution of the British Welfare State (1978); Gilbert, The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain (1973); Thane, The Origins of British Social Policy (1981).

strong and Fraser is prompted to include "... some retrospective glances at earlier developments within the Poor Law" (1978:1). For Fraser, there is an essential nature to the British Welfare State; there is something in "English Society", "something about the atmosphere" (ibid.:4). Perhaps, as Bruce suggests, it is "... the typical empirical approach of the English" (1961:14). ^③

In Bruce's terms, the British Welfare State really began in 1948. Nevertheless, the Elizabethan Poor Law did, he feels, provide "... the base from which ... social concern developed and broadened ..." (1973:4) until, in the "century and a half" leading up to 1948, communal altruism began to develop into a "concern for the welfare of all" (ibid.:1). And yet, if texts by Bruce, Fraser and Seed represent the orthodoxy of social policy histories they differ little from avowedly radical discourses. Corrigan and Corrigan, for example, present a brief history of state formation and social policy, beginning in the Tudor period: therein lie the "... origins of both the modern English state and social policy" (1979:3). In addition "... the market forms of the capitalist mode of production were being established". Tudor social policy was to lay the "roots" of the distinction between deserving and undeserving poor and was to "begin the story" of centralised administration (ibid.:4). As the first paper in a collection of essays on Social Work, Welfare and the State it serves as the ritual genuflection to the mysterious history of origins. The paper ends with an apologia - it is not to be understood as an analysis of naturally evolving social policy or about humanitarianism, "...

although both are also involved" (ibid.:17-18). But the motif is familiar. The capitalist mode of production is a stage in a rational historical process and its coming can be read in the social legislation of the sixteenth century. (5)

Radicals, then, look down radical telescopes but they are pointed in the same direction and at the same facts which interest liberal writers. Ginsburg, for example, seeks to "... draw out some simple relationships between the minutiae of policy development and the broad sweep of qualitative changes ..." (1979: 29). In other words, he seeks to extract the essential features from the complex matrix of historical events. Early essences are, however, weak essences, "little or nothing" is to be said, therefore, about events prior to the nineteenth century. This is not, however, to throw doubt upon the fact that "... the history of the state as both a welfare state and as a form of the capital relation goes back of course to the genesis of capitalism from within the feudal mode of production" (ibid.:30). Ginsburg's teleology allows him to identify characteristics necessary to the concept of 'capitalism' within the social relations that precede it. "In the period of primitive accumulation", he writes, "the state assisted in forcibly creating capitalist social relations ..." (ibid.:31). But, as Hindess and Hirst maintain:

"All conceptions in which a structure is defined in the future anterior, by the future results of present phenomena, involve a collapse into idealist and teleological theories of history" (1975:271).

Radical historical discourse on social policy seeks to link the essence of that social policy to the essence of 'capitalism'. Thus, whereas for liberal theorists the motor-force of welfare discourse is often the humanitarian nature of a culture or the logic of progress, for the radical it is the onward march of the capitalist mode of production - present in its absence. Despite, then, a degree of emphasis in most radical and liberal discourses on the ad hoc or contingent nature of social policy, both ultimately adopt determinist stances. Though the process may be held up for a while by the efforts of individuals or groups, it cannot be held back for long because the process is a totality in motion; a self-adjusting mechanism.

(ii) Convergence Theory or Theoretical Convergence? A notable consequence of the conception of society as a totality is its portrayal as a smoothly running synergistic organism or mechanism.

[Anything which threatens this 'normal' state (dysfunction) is systematically and competently neutralised.] Under such conceptions, dysfunctions are technical faults - a failure in childhood socialisation, perhaps - which are rectified in the process of reproduction of the totality. For liberal discourses the mechanism of historical development is often portrayed as the progress of civilisation, the growth of humanitarianism. For radicals it is often the gradual consolidation of ruling class hegemony. Thus, for Bruce:

"Gradually ... the positive role of the state was developed, in order to ensure ... the establishment of all at standard acceptable to civilised society" (1973:4).

Whilst for Gilbert, the "early architects of the Welfare State" -

"... although by no means solving the problem of the condition of the people ... settled the lines upon which the eventual solution would be found" (1973:451, 452).

(7) For Melossi, on the other hand, the "administrative apparatus of the modern welfare state", though created through "working class" struggle, is "turned to the real advantage of capitalism" (1979:96). For the liberal commentator, the Welfare State often appears to be an unquestionable good: for the radical it is one-dimensional at worst (Marcuse, 1968; Hearn, 1978) and an unsatisfactory compromise at best (Saville, 1957/8; Miliband, 1977; Gough, 1979).

In her paper on Tory interpretations of history, Hart notes that schoolchildren are now taught "as an article of dogmatic faith" that the 'Whig' interpretation of history is false (1974:197). The 'Whig' interpretation, she points out, is usually condemned for its emphasis upon "heroes and villains". (6) This kind of humanist reduction is, however, common within histories of the Welfare State. 'Heroes' such as Chadwick, Shaftesbury, Lloyd George and Beveridge are described as the architects of the modern

6. Herbert Butterworth's use of the phrase in his The Whig Interpretation of History (1931) referred to the tendency of certain Victorian historians to view English history as a struggle between reactionaries (Tories) and progressives (Whigs) which the latter won. Marx writes of "Macaulay, who has falsified English history in the interest of the Whigs and the bourgeoisie ..." (Capital, Vol.1., 1977:260, footnote). Although the liberal histories discussed in this chapter are often portrayed by radicals as the descendants of the 'Whig' interpretation, radical histories are inclined to endorse similar interpretations.

Welfare State whilst Octavia Hill, Samuel Barnett, and so on always appear as pioneers of social work (Bruce, 1961; Fraser, 1978; Seed, 1973; Woodroffe, 1974). As Woodroffe records succinctly:

"Although human knowledge owes much to the anonymous many, its greatest debt is to the gifted few" (1974:101).

The 'Tory' histories which are reviewed by Hart have, then, much in common with the liberal histories being discussed, particularly in terms of their sweeping statements about "the conscience ... of the nineteenth century" and its "strong sense of social responsibility". (7) If 'Tory' historians sought to substitute the amorphous essentialism of the 'onward march of civilisation' for the 'Whig' essentialism of idealism, Goldthorpe identifies a similar reaction to the trend which, it was felt, had been established by the jurist Dicey.

For Dicey, legislation represented the end product of a process which began with the thoughts and ideas of outstanding individuals and which influenced public opinion. The reaction described by Goldthorpe saw changes in social policy not as the result of "...

7. Quoted by Hart from Kitson Clark's The Making of Victorian England. Whilst the form of essentialism may be the same, the political and ideological conditions of existence of 'liberal' and 'Tory' discourses may differ considerably. Self-styled conservative historians have, in recent years, set themselves the task of showing that the 19th century period of industrialisation was not necessarily populated by nasty capitalists and hard done by workers. McCord writes that "... the new industrial society did not invent child labour or poor housing or bad sanitation ... it did, however, do distinctly more to remedy them than any previous generation had done" (1976:88). See also The Long Debate on Poverty (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1972) and Hayek's History and Politics, described by the publishers as "A defence of the early factory system and its social and economic consequences by a group of distinguished conservative historians".



shifts in dominant modes of thought and belief" but, rather, as "a complex process ... to be interpreted as an integral part of a general pattern of development of the society as a whole ..." (1962:47). Such a reaction Goldthorpe labels as functionalist. The industrialisation process, for example, was seen to necessitate state intervention. Polanyi, for example, wrote that "the one comprehensive feature" of the 19th century was that "Society protected itself against the perils inherent in a self-regulating market system". State intervention, within such discourse, is necessary: to counteract the uncertainties and insecurities of life in an industrialised nation; to reduce social waste; to prevent class conflict erupting into rebellion (1962:48). The ad hoc character of social policy, it is argued, is merely the human reaction to an inevitable process which accompanies industrialisation. As Goldthorpe puts it: "... social problems came first, social philosophy after" (ibid.:49). Comparative research, of course, confirms the process as inevitable.

Although Mishra takes his texts from a later period (Mishra, 1973; 1977), the "convergence theory" he describes is identical to the discourse reviewed by Goldthorpe. 'Society' is conceived as a totality (industrialised society); social change as an essence (the industrialisation process). Changes in the social system are interpreted as changes necessitated by the requirements of an industrialised society (Mishra, 1973:538). Thus, a well-organised compulsory system of education is functionally demanded to provide the appropriate calibre of workforce for industrial and commercial

occupations (Mishra, 1977:34). 'Convergence theory', then, postulates a specific form of development appropriate for an industrialised society and, ultimately, all industrialised nations must follow this general route (ibid.:36). The 'convergence theory' described by Goldthorpe and by Mishra is, however, only part of a wider convergence of theories; a conflux of economism, conspiracy approaches and forms of humanism. Most discourse on the Welfare State can, in fact, be shown to be variants of some or all of these modes of analysis.

(iii) Economism.

"State forms, like other knowing subjects, carry within them only that which is given in predication. Analysis can only rediscover the realisation of the subtle cleverness of this already given process as it appropriates new problems" (Burton and Carlen, 1979:39-40).

In its most extreme form, economism is completely deterministic. In its Marxist form, it conceptualises the capitalist mode of production as a total and invulnerable system of exploitation by capital of labour. Social and welfare legislation are reduced directly to facets of the economic system which guarantee the reproduction of the forces and relations of production, that is, healthy, mobile, educated and socialised workers and capitalists. In this form, volition is ultimately an irrelevance. Amelioration of suffering can only happen if the net benefit accrues to the economic system. It may, of course, be argued that such a crude approach is unlikely to be popularly endorsed and that this

determinist element in Marxist theoretical discourse merely "... reflects limitations to the concepts and language available ..." (Gray, 1977:73). Nevertheless, that language, and those concepts, are all too readily adopted. The inadequacies of the analysis result from the way in which concepts are developed and problematised. The functionalist 'systems theory' approach adopted leads inevitably to economic determinism. As Hirst says of Althusser's thesis on the reproduction of the relations of production, when the question posed takes the form - 'how is it possible for capitalist social relations to exist?', "No general answer can be given ... which is not functionalist" (1979:43). Economism is, then, a most pure form of essentialism, irrespective of the emphasis which may be being given to materialism. "Once more has teleology found its God and His name is Capital" (Burton and Carlen, 1979:37).

Economism does, of course, appear in less apparently deterministic forms. Revision of a pure economism may, for example, be based on the Marxist conception of the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode of production, that is, the socialised nature of the production process in contrast to the privatised nature of ownership of the means of production. This fundamental contradiction manifests itself in class conflict between capital and labour. Within the realm of welfare and social policy, the contradiction is often identified in the supposed incompatibility between the ethic of altruism which characterises a Welfare State and the form of social relations necessary within a 'capitalist' economy (George and Wilding, 1976:viii-ix, 118; Mishra, 1977:31; Stearn, 1979:20-1;

Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:70). Appreciation of this 'contradiction', perhaps because of its obviousness, is also apparent within liberal discourse. Marshall, of course, is widely quoted as identifying that the form of equality ('citizenship') created by the Welfare State is also the "foundation ... on which the structure of inequality could be built". (8) It is also worth noting that it was Titmuss who addressed a Fabian audience with the following words:

"One of the most important tasks for socialists in the 1960s will be to redefine and restate the inherent illogicalities and contradictions in the managerial capitalist system ..." (The Irresponsible Society, in Titmuss, 1976:215. Emphasis added.)

Given the obviousness of 'the contradiction', the question arises as to how 'the exploiters' control 'the exploited'. The basic Hobbesian tenets of the war of all against all are premised on a view of the anarchic qualities of human nature. Freedom and desire lead to chaos. The natural desire for survival, however, also leads men into a social contract which deposits power with a sovereign authority (Habermas, 1974:43 et seq.). Hobbes' 'fundamental contradiction' - freedom of action results in a situation in which freedom cannot be exercised - is carried over into orthodox Parsonian sociology with its conceptions of social solidarity, the internalisation of norms and its general consensus theory of social control. On the other hand, for Marxist theorists,

8. Quoted, for example, by Mishra (1977:23) from Marshall's Sociology at the Crossroads.

the 'problem of order' does not arise as the result of human nature but is a direct reflection of the class structure appropriate to specific modes of production (Anspack, 1979:6). Despite this divergence in philosophies of man, however, 'solutions' are surprisingly similar within liberal and radical discourses.

Speaking of what they term the "politicist position", Burton and Carlen write:

"The state expresses class power but in a politically autonomous form. The source of this autonomy is ... derivable from the structure of the economic mode of production" (1979:38).

The state carries out the task of social control on capital's behalf but under a flag of neutrality, that is, the political processes of social democracy. Clearly, within the Marxist tradition, the work of Althusser has been most influential in presenting this thesis of the 'relative autonomy' of the state. In his paper on "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971), Althusser seeks to theorise not merely the process by which labour power is reproduced as one facet of the reproduction of the means of production but also the way in which a "competent" supply of labour is maintained through time. What is required, argues Althusser, is not merely the reproduction of skills but also the reproduction of the workers' "submission to the ruling ideology" and the reproduction of "the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly" by the "agents of exploitation and repression" (1971:127-8). Central to this process, Althusser identifies "the capitalist education system". Adopting the

explicit topographical metaphor of the economic base and the politico-legal and ideological superstructure, Althusser argues for determination "in the last instance" by the economic base, a position which allows "relative autonomy" to the superstructure. Over and above the state repressive machinery (police; courts; army; etc.), Althusser theorises the ideological state apparatuses (ISA). It is the ISAs which provide the legitimation for the ruling ideology of the ruling class (ibid.:139) and which largely secure the reproduction of the relations of production (ibid.:142).

Althusser's thesis of the relative autonomy of the ideological state apparatuses can be seen as a theoretical reaction to a number of empirical problems which have faced Marxists. For example, the failure of 'capitalist' economies to break down through internal contradictions (class conflict; verelendung - the theory of the gradual ^{im}emiseration of the proletariat); the apparent incorporation of the 'working classes' into the ruling ideology; the ability of the state to operate in direct opposition to the wishes of capital. As such, the theory has engendered an important interest in features of capitalist relations of production previously treated as epiphenomenal and of minor concern. (9) This has been particularly welcomed by Marxist theorists working in academic and professional realms associated with the superstructural 'levels'. Ian Gough's The Political Economy of the Welfare State (1979) has

9. Burton and Carlen note that the concept of relative autonomy has made it possible to raise questions about the possibility of a non-correspondence of the economic, political and ideological realms.

aroused a great deal of interest (10) and it is worth spending some time to examine his use of the notion of the relative autonomy of the state and the way in which this usage converges with other approaches discussed in this chapter so far.

"Functionalist theories of the welfare state", argues Gough, "objectify all processes within society and see policy developments as a passive response to these social or non-social 'forces'" (1979: 8). Gough specifically criticises Marxist forms of this functionalist approach as they are applied to analyses of crisis tendencies in 'capitalist' economies (1975:55-7). It is, however, difficult to see in what way Gough's work differs from these functionalist positions. We are told, for example, that because the 'capitalist class' has been unable to organise "itself" as a political force the state has had "... to step in and realize its political hegemony, to act as a class conscious political directorate" (1975:64). The state, then, operates in the ultimate interests of the "dominant class(es)" whilst "politically disabling the dominated classes" through the legitimated medium of the democratic political system (ibid.:65). Relative autonomy is required to 'pull off' this subterfuge and is "a structurally determined characteristic" (ibid.). Relative autonomy allows the state to act in the long term interests of capital and this

10. Beginning perhaps with his "State expenditure in advanced capitalism" in New Left Review (Gough, 1975). Gough's relative autonomy thesis is, in fact, based on the work of Poulantzas and of Miliband but, for present purposes, Poulantzas' version of 'relative autonomy' (1977) is identical to Althusser's usage (1971).

necessitates the frustration of its short term demands on occasion, or the support of one fraction of capital against another.

"This 'unstable equilibrium of compromise' provides the basis for the whole series of social and economic reforms extracted by the working class in the post-war 'welfare states' of advanced capitalist societies, which yet leaves untouched the political power of capital ..." (Gough, 1975:65).

For Gough there are "... trends ... clearly discernible in all advanced capitalist countries" (1975:61): there is an "... autonomous dynamic of capitalism" (1979:32) not unlike the autogeny of the 'free market' system. Nevertheless, the inherent contradiction of 'capitalism' constantly "generates new 'needs' or 'requirements' in the arena of social policy" (1979:32).

Apart from his use of the relative autonomy thesis, Gough attempts to free himself from functionalist determinism through the incorporation into his discourse of what he describes as "action" or "pluralist" theory. Gough, like many Marxists before him, wishes to acknowledge the successes of the labour movement in the class struggle. Rather than providing the promised fusion of functionalist and action perspectives, however, Gough inevitably vacillates (1979:10). In place of the "erroneous view" that "working-class struggle for welfare reforms always ultimately works in the interest of capital" (ibid.:65), Gough suggests that "... it is the threat of a powerful working-class movement which galvanises the ruling class to think more cohesively and strategically, and to restructure the state apparatus to this end" (ibid.). It is just

such conspiratorial and hegemonic restructuring of the state which leads to "... the steady incorporation of the working class, via their trade unions and parties ..." (ibid.:67). The "autonomous dynamic of capitalism" does, then, ultimately have its way. As Burton and Carlen record:

"It is significant that the relative autonomy causality must see practices both as the effect of class struggles and as the effect of structures" (1979:39).

The relative autonomy perspective is, however, as they move on to suggest, "ultimately economistic". Despite the "mediating processes of class struggle", there is a "knowingness within the state apparatuses that is ultimately given to it by the logic of capital accumulation" (ibid.).

Gough's thesis begins and ends in dogma. 'Capitalism' is inherently crisis-ridden and that will be its downfall. Gough, then, closes his 1979 text with the declaration that "The welfare state is a product of the contradictory development of capitalist society and in turn it has generated new contradictions which every day become more apparent" (1979:152).

The relative autonomy thesis is, then, simply a more complex version of economism (Burton and Carlen, 1979:39; Hirst, 1979:53). The essence unifying state apparatuses is the unity of their function - the reproduction of the relations of production - which is characterised by the unity of the 'ruling class'. Thus, as Hirst says, that which unites the ideological state apparatuses is both their cause and their effect; the unity of the 'ruling class' (1979:50). Such a position,

within a rationalist empiricist epistemology, maintains that classes exist as social forces "independently of their representation by the political and ideological instances" (Hirst, 1979:51). But, as was suggested in the opening chapter, this entails the "... appeal to something outside the discourse as a measure of its correctness ..." (Burton and Carlen, 1979:42), a position which "... entails a dogmatist privileging of a causality whose determinacy cannot be demonstrated" (ibid.). The amorphous unity of the 'ruling class' is given representation, and its effectivity demonstrated, in the unity of the social formation and its capitalist relations. Anything which serves the function of maintaining this unity, ipso facto is interpreted as being part of the state apparatus. But, as Laclau notes, the state can thereby no longer be characterised as an "instance" but must be seen as a "quality", an essence "... which pervades all the levels of a social formation" (1975:101).

Althusserian structuralism has been likened to Parsons' systems theory (Giddens, 1979:52, 112): "Parsons's actors are cultural dopes, but Althusser's agents are structural dopes ..." (ibid.:52). Parsons, however, sought a synthesis of 'action' and 'structure' whereas Althusser's discourse is specifically anti-humanist. (11) In that sense, Gough is closer to Parsons than to Althusser when he seeks to "grasp" the "interrelation in the historical process" between "objective" and "subjective" elements (Gough, 1979:10). He has,

11. See "Marxism and Humanism" in Althusser (1969).

nevertheless, begun a process of re-examination of welfare discourse as a contribution to the transformation of the Welfare State from "welfare capitalism" to "welfare socialism" (ibid.:153). It is important, therefore, to appreciate the tensions and contradictions in Gough's work because similar Marxist interpretations of welfare discourse have been presented over recent years. Corrigan and Leonard, for instance, ⁽¹²⁾ have had considerable influence on 'radical social work' discourse. Leonard maintains that rigorous analyses of the Welfare State have been in short supply and the series - "Critical Texts in Social Work and the Welfare State", of which he is the editor, is designed to fill that gap. ⁽¹³⁾ The residual humanism which a number of Marxist interpretations of welfare discourse retain, however, leads to their easy rejection as vulgar conspiracy theories and leaves liberal 'allies' not merely unaffected but often disaffected. ⁽¹⁴⁾

(iv) The Conspiratorial Approach. A so-called conspiracy theory, by definition, proposes an analysis of class conflict in terms of a

12. Corrigan and Leonard specifically acknowledge "... the work of Marx and the early Marxists, and also the ... work of Gramsci, and ... the work of Althusser, Poulantzas and Miliband" (1978:92).

13. See Leonard's "Editor's Introduction" to Corrigan and Leonard (1978) and Gough (1979). Other texts in the series which will be referred to in this thesis are Ginsburg's Class, Capital and Social Policy (1979) and Towards Socialist Welfare Work. Working in the State, by Bolger, Corrigan, Docking and Frost (1981). It is, perhaps, a register of Leonard's social work eclecticism that he should feel it necessary to claim that the series seeks to "... offer some alternative Marxist perspectives", any more than this apparently being "... to indulge in sectarian dogmatism" (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978: xiv).

14. See the scathing remarks in Taylor's "Where 'fantasy radicalism' leads us" (1978).

(9)

methodological individualism. As such, it can be very easily 'set-up' by its critics as a crude thesis of voluntarism, the more readily to knock it down again. Thus, Higgins' view of conspiracy theory is that "Ruling élites are said to act on the basis of certain predictable patterns of behaviour, to defend their self-interest and to assert their superiority" (1978:15). At its most basic level, conspiracy theory postulates a ruling élite with a coherence of identity and purpose, combined with a pervasiveness of power, which enables it to neutralise the slightest threat. That a conspiracy is required, however, suggests that force alone is not a sufficient instrument of domination. Unfortunately, analyses such as that offered by Higgins, tend to tackle conspiracy approaches on their own terms, leaving the way open for empirical countering. For example, the claim that a conspiracy theory attributes a greater degree of control by the ruling élite than 'the facts' warrant can easily be countered by the argument that 'conspiracies' may merely help the ruling élite to 'muddle through'. By emphasising conspiracy theory's implication of "... a 'grand plan' and a comprehensive strategy ...", Higgins (1978:17) draws attention to the theory's endorsement of methodological individualism. Such a debate, however, is inclined to degenerate into a contest between forms of individual and structural reductionism.

Ironically, it is Marxist theory which is accused of both an overemphasis on structural determinism and conspiracy theories. The accusation, however, does reveal an awkward tension in much Marxist discourse intent upon seeing the Welfare State as both a subtle form

of social control and a hard won concession by the labour movement. As Gray laments: "It is extremely difficult to avoid formulations that suggest a conspiratorial and mechanistic view of the class struggle" (1977:73). It is, however, no solution to suggest, as Leonard does in his editor's "Introduction" to Gough (1979:ix), that what is required is a mental dexterity and a pure heart. In fact, the "sensitive and careful" Marxist who "has to walk a tightrope between crude functionalism and starry-eyed voluntarism" is likely to meet the spectre of Richard Titmuss making his way from the opposite end of the same rope.

History, of course, does provide a wealth of empirical support for the view that those in élite strata consciously sought to maintain their supremacy over the acknowledged producers of wealth and both liberal and radical commentators on the 19th century have wallowed in its richness. Countering what he saw as the inevitable dismissive accusation of being a "crude conspiracy" theorist, Jones argues that such accusations "... sadly miss the point ... in their search for 'sophistication'" and consequently they "obscure the consciousness of the ruling classes who do think and plan and are often (mostly) aware of the consequences of their policies ..." (1978:70, footnote). That human individuals think and calculate is no revelation: Jones, however, sees no requirement to explain what or who "the ruling classes" are and how they 'think' and 'calculate'. Does Jones refer to the sum of individual consciousnesses or to the idealist conception of the 'spirit' of a class? In fact, it would seem that Marxist discourse often attempts to incorporate both brands

of essentialism. Empirical material about subjects is read as representative of the general class position to which they belong. As Althusser puts it: "... an empiricism of the subject always corresponds to an idealism of the essence ..." (1969:228). Empirical material is interpreted in terms of its essential reflection of class interests but those class interests are to be known and identified in their empirical manifestations. Human agency, then, is used to interpret structure: structure is used to interpret human agency. Despite its circularity, however, this formulation is grasped by radicals in the welfare field: by Leonard, who wants to find a happy medium between "crude functionalism" and "starry-eyed voluntarism"; and by Gough, who juxtaposes the "negative aspects" of the Welfare State (its "repressive, capital-oriented side") and its "positive aspects" ("the very real gains that a century of conflict has won") (1979:14). And it has its counterparts within liberal discourse.

Fraser's thesis about the "evolution" of the Welfare State adopts a number of approaches, all broadly illustrating British pragmatism and good sense. Thus, the "history of social policy is ... the story of individual and collective response to the practical problems thrown up by an industrial society" (1978:226); the Welfare State "... was not born - it had evolved" (ibid.:222). The rational evolution of social policy transformed voluntary enterprise into state intervention as part of "... a dynamic process of adjustment between individual and society" (ibid.). Despite the influence of particular individuals; the need to "compromise between

individualism and collectivism, between voluntary and state action" (ibid.:223); and the use of social policy "as a tool of political expediency" (ibid.:224); the British Welfare State is ultimately the outcome of "evolutionary forces" (ibid.:226).

Just as Gough wants to build into his discourse an "autonomous dynamic of capitalism" and considerations of structure and agency, Fraser wants to talk of "evolutionary forces" and "pragmatic responses" to the "needs of society". Similarly, Pinker seeks "accommodation" of "the claims of the social market and those of the economic market" (1979:249). Seeking to rid his discourse of the kinds of "ideological infections" which afflict the disputes between classical political economy and Marxism, egoism and altruism, Right and Left, Pinker places his faith in the 'mixed economy', mercantile collectivism and a theoretical eclecticism. There is, Pinker insists, no inherent conflict between social and economic policy (1976:102; 1979:241). Pinker, no less than Gough, wants to emphasise voluntarism and determinism: "... the making of day-to-day policy on social issues ... does operate within a distinctly pluralist process, but ... the limits of policy-making are set by élites ..." (1979:242-3). (15)

What we witness in both liberal and radical discourses is the attempt to identify the force which provides society/history with a structure ('capitalist dynamic'; 'evolution'; power of an élite)

15. Pinker adopts the concept of a "bounded pluralism" from a text by Hall, Land, Parker and Webb - Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy and commends the authors for their combination of systems analysis, pluralism and class theories.

and, at the same moment, to allocate a degree of autonomy to facets of the superstructure (class struggle; individual enterprise; social policy). It makes little difference whether the structural force achieves stability and consensus through the 'incorporation' of the 'working class' or through a negotiated compromise. It might well be asked whether there is any substantial difference between the Marxist position condemned by Pinker because the logic of that discourse portrays "the discipline and practice of social policy and administration ... as a snare and a delusion ..." (1976:37) and Pinker's own view that "... welfare systems contribute in very real terms to the maintenance of stability and consensus" and that "Social services receive and reallocate resources in order to ameliorate social conflict and strengthen the bonds of social solidarity" (1976:102). Both the radical conspiracy approach and the liberal consensus model attempt to blend a system determinacy with an 'action' contingent. But whereas Gough talks of class conflict, Pinker talks of the "variety of ends held by groups in different social situations" (1976:103). Nevertheless, both attempt to bridge the "ontological gulf" between agency and structure and, to avoid the inevitable tension which results from voluntarism, call upon a class or a humanist essentialism.

(v) Class, Humanism and Conspiracy. According to Goldthorpe, convergence theory offered three main 'explanations' for social policy: the counteraction of 'diswelfares' resulting from industrialisation; an economic investment in social capital; and the defusing of class conflict. That convergence theory represents, rather, a theoretical

convergence is suggested by its parallels with Saville's position which is widely quoted in radical texts:

"The Welfare State ... has come about as a result of the interaction of three main factors: (i) the struggle of the working class against their exploitation; (ii) the requirements of industrial capitalism ... for a more efficient environment in which to operate and in particular the need for a highly productive labour force; (iii) recognition by the property owners of the price that has to be paid for political security" (1957/8:5-6).

The essential factor for Saville, as he later explains, is the agitation of the working class (ibid.:9). George and Wilding characterise the Marxist theory of social policy in exactly the same way (1976:15). Gough's approach is also, basically, the same. The "major determinants of the modern Welfare State", for Gough, are the struggle and influence of the working class; the centralisation of the state; and the influence of the former over the latter (1979:68). Centralisation of the state is explained, in part, as the "restructuring" which the ruling class is forced to implement as the result of working class struggle (ibid.:65-6). It is within the terms of this process that Gough explains "periods of innovation and growth in welfare policies" (ibid.:66). For the 'working class', such policies are "to be welcomed" as mitigations of hardship. For the 'capitalist class', a welfare policy is also seen to be in its interests because it reduces 'working class' discontent and provides "... an added means of integrating and controlling the working class and offers economic or ideological benefits too" (ibid.).

Saville is more direct about his belief that the 'ruling class'

is able to remove the sting from the tail of any 'working class' victories. "Normally", he asserts, "the legislative reforms ... have been fully and carefully calculated ..." (1957/8:10). In addition, legislative delays can usually be manufactured by "the vested interests to mobilise themselves" (ibid.:11). George and Wilding endorse this interpretation; the actual formulation of social policy, they argue, may well result in the 'upper class' re-adjusting the balance in its own favour (1976:18-20).

Despite attempts by radical theorists to give voluntarism an effective role in their work in the form of the class struggle, they become trapped by the determinism of the "laws of motion of capital" (Leonard, in Gough, 1979:ix) or the "built-in requirements of the industrial order" (Saville, 1957/8:11). The imperative nature of these 'laws' is required by the nature of the critique offered in radical discourses for, as Gough puts it, without them "... we would be back with a Marxist variant of the pluralist theories criticised ..." (1979:62). Having postulated or presumed ontological statuses for 'agents' and for 'structures' and the relationship between them, radicals who refuse pluralism face castigation as crude conspiracy theorists; the only alternative is to produce a system determinacy. Pendulation between structural and agent causality cannot be sustained: the result is an uninspiring circularity of discourse. For example: Gough argues that the state acts in the long term interests of capital and suggests that "What we wish to discover is the mechanism by which these ... interests are mediated and articulated by the state" (1979: 62-3). The centralisation of the state, Gough argues, has assisted

in this task. In addition, "What ... has increasingly emerged ... is ... a 'class conscious political directorate' ..." (ibid.:63). One of the main "interests" to be met by the state is the reproduction of labour power; that is a "function" to be performed (ibid.:62) and social policy is an essential aspect of that "function". Social policy is often the result of class struggle "... adapted to serve the needs of capital" (ibid.). Consequently there is a "congruence of interests tending in the direction of developing the welfare state" (ibid.:65). The restructuring of the state is the result, Gough argues, of "the threat of a powerful working-class movement which galvanises the ruling class to think more cohesively and strategically ..." (ibid.). Thus, we find that the centralised and cohesive state is the result of the 'working class' threat and the rational action of the 'ruling class' but it is also an imperative of the 'capitalist mode of production' and its need to reproduce labour power. Social policy is, in part, a reaction to 'working class' pressure but social policy is one way in which the state fulfils the function of reproduction of labour power. To suggest that this outline ignores Gough's emphasis upon the development of 'capitalism' and social policy (16) is merely to amplify the essentialism of his discourse. The action of the state is reduced, by Gough, to the simple reflection of 'ruling class' requirements. To extend the analysis historically into what Gough calls the "prior state structure and origins of capitalist development" is to switch from a class to an

16. See Gough's diagram, for example, ("Figure 4.1", 1979:68).

economistic essentialism. In fact, Gough says nothing of these 'origins'.

Early in his text, Gough accuses Titmuss of adopting an empirical, eclectic, multi-disciplinary approach, utilizing "... technical determinism, class conflict, pluralist group analysis and a Durkheimian view of social policy as an integrative element in modern society" (1979:9). For "technical determinism" Gough substitutes "imperatives created by the capitalist industrialisation process"; for "pluralist group analysis" Gough substitutes a "congruence of interests"; Durkheimian social solidarity is replaced by what Gough calls "an ideology of the welfare state" (ibid.:66), which assists in the "incorporation of the working class", and by the functioning of the state in the production of "... specific patterns of socialisation, behaviour, specific capacities and personality structures" (ibid.:46). Radical theories are conspiratorial because they require a manipulated consensus to replace liberal views of the civilisation of capitalism and yet both Titmuss and Gough can talk of class conflict.

Again, then, the question must be asked about what it is that distinguishes radical discourse from the liberal discourse it seeks to replace. Primarily, differences reside in the ideological and political conditions of formation of the respective discourses. Unfortunately, these distinctions are reflected in radical posturing rather than a readiness to tackle the implications of the problematisation of discourse on welfare and the state. All too often radical texts are given over to a contest of 'superior facts'!

in which structural arguments are used against individualist approaches and vice versa. For example, Miliband's attempt to demystify the democratic-pluralist interpretation of the state does not tackle theoretical and methodological weaknesses but, rather, seeks to reveal that it is empirically in error (1977:254). (17)

Ginsburg produces, according to the "Editor's Introduction", "compelling evidence" to show that the state bureaucracy has "continuously counteracted" 'working class' gains in welfare legislation (1979:xiv). What seems to distinguish texts such as Miliband's scholarly The State in Capitalist Society from equally scholarly texts in liberal discourse, for example Titmuss' Income Distribution and Social Change, is the form of chiasm displayed. For many liberal theorists, the millennium has indeed arrived: "Now that we have it, [the Welfare State] ... we have not yet perfected it, what, we may ask, are we going to make of it ...?" (Bruce, 1961:293). For Miliband, "socialist society" will arrive "Sooner or later", and when it does it will be "... an authentically democratic social order, a truly free society ..." (1976:247). The barriers to "welfare socialism", for Gough, are technical and social (false consciousness). In his one page "Political Postscript", Gough argues: "Once the contradictory nature of the welfare state and its contradictory impact on capitalism is appreciated, then the political strategy ... can be defined" (1979:153).

17. Like Gough (1975:61-4), Miliband also argues that, despite cultural differences, all capitalist states are heading in the same direction (1976:9).

Meanwhile, the 'working class' awaits its moment of revelation on the road to Damascus. George and Wilding, on the other hand, retreat into the search for "a value basis for a new radical social policy" (1976:129), the search for 'superior facts' proving too onerous a task. "The welfare state", they conclude, "is clearly not the end of the road of social evolution. What will succeed it depends on such a complex variety of economic, social and political factors ... that it makes prediction no more than crystal-ball gazing" (ibid.:137).

All of the self-styled radical texts discussed in this chapter seek to found political calculation upon sociological and economic predictions. They reflect an ever-present tension in Marxist discourse between an historical determinism, portraying the inevitable demise of 'capitalism', and a belief in the effectivity of the class struggle. The tension does, of course, exist in the works of Marx and Engels, though this is often amplified through the compounding of their 'scientific' and propaganda texts. Attempts to produce a synthesis of structure and agency result in the kind of textual sleight of hand, evident in a number of radical texts, which portray classes as embodiments of both human agency and social structure. (11)

Both Ginsburg and Gough begin their studies with an outline of the Marxist conception of the 'capitalist mode of production'. The basic concepts of capital and labour are discussed as are the concepts of surplus labour and surplus value. In traditional form, Gough and Ginsburg discuss the realisation of surplus labour as surplus value in

terms of a relationship of exploitation of the 'working class' by the 'capitalists'. In effect, these authors provide a sociological version of Marxist discourse. They import a humanism in which human agents fill the social roles of 'labourers' and 'capitalists'. The relationship between labour and capital is, thereafter, based upon considerations about human motivation, social interaction, and the exploitation of one social group by another. Although the point will be taken up more fully in the next chapter, it should be noted that the reduction of the concept of economic class to the role and functioning of human agents in the social division of labour and the view of 'appropriation of surplus labour' as expropriation, necessitate ontological presumptions about agents-as-subjects which cannot be sustained. The general concept of 'appropriation of surplus labour' describes the mode of realisation and utilization of the surplus demanded by the concept of social formation as a viable form of social relations. Even under conditions in which the means of production are communally owned, surplus labour will have to be 'appropriated'.

Writers such as Gough have a tendency to conflate the discussion of relations of production, economic agents and subjects within the occupation system. For Gough, 'relations of production' are "social relations between classes" (1979:19). The 'mode of production' refers to "... the way in which one class extracts surplus labour from another ..." (ibid.). "Classes ... are groups in antagonistic relation to the means of production ..." (ibid.). What characterises a mode of production, then, is the relations between antagonistic

groups. Gough's discourse is a form of class essentialism. Despite what he describes as "the well-known division between working class and middle class", Gough notes that "The classes of the dominant mode leave their stamp on all classes within it ..." (1979:20); that "stamp" signifies what is essential to the mode of production. This form of sociological essentialism ignores two important points made by Hirst: "First, the relations of production include not only agents but forms of relation between agents". The conditions of existence of relations of production cannot be reduced to the consideration of intersubjectivity. Secondly "... not all economic agents are human subjects" (1979:47). Economic agents are defined by their relationship to the means of production. The effective ownership and control of these means by capital cannot be reduced to their possession and control by individual capitalists. As Hirst argues, "... corporate entities may be the social forms of effective possession of capital ..." (ibid.).

The form of class essentialism typified by Gough, in which human subjects carry the essential features of their class position and relations of production are essentially relations between classes, involves what Poulantzas calls "... the search for finalist explanations founded on the motivations of conduct of the individual actors" (1977:242). Poulantzas' own attempt to substitute a concept of agents as "'bearers' of objective instances" (ibid.) merely replaces humanism by economism. This point will be taken up in the next section when Hirst's critique of Althusser's concept of 'ideology' will be discussed. It is sufficient to record here that

writers such as Corrigan and Leonard who follow Althusser and Poulantzas, conceive of the Welfare State as a mechanism for the reproduction of the relations of production through the reproduction and socialisation of the workforce ⁽¹⁸⁾ (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:74-7). Such a formulation must inevitably take the shape of an economistic reduction - the 'welfare system' is essentially a feature of the 'economic system', or a conspiratorial approach - the 'welfare system' is an adjunct in the exploitation and subjugation of one social group by another. In the effort to avoid these forms of reduction, radical theorists turn to the concept of ideology.

Marx's concept of commodity fetishism (1977:76-87) is discussed in very similar terms by both Ginsburg and Gough. The exploitative nature of the relationship between capital and labour is distorted by the equality of relations apparent in the commodity form. The commodity is 'fetishised' in the sense that it is seen to embody the value of the labour expended by the workers who produced it. This formal equality in the commodity market disguises the class structure of 'capitalism' (Gough, 1979:25). For both Gough and Ginsburg (1979: 37) the state plays a part in the production and maintenance of this ideological form, endorsing its appearance of neutrality. 'Capitalism', then, is given legitimation through the commodity form of equality and it is this legitimation which solves the 'problem of control' in non-coercive ways. But again the tension between structure and agency

18. Both Gough and Ginsburg talk of the reproduction of labour power but also adopt a humanist reduction.

comes to torment radical discourse. If the 'working class' are unable to see through this subterfuge it can only be because the 'ruling class' conspire to deceive with the assistance of 'their' ideological state apparatuses. Alternatively, the very force of the dynamic autonomy of 'capitalism' is seen to be beyond the control of any one group of individuals: ideology, as Hirst puts it, is a "structure effect" (1979:76 et seq.). In either case, the struggle of the 'working class', so often emphasised, is given no real influence in radical discourse.

The concept of the 'relative autonomy' of the various levels of the superstructure used by Gough and by Corrigan and Leonard explicitly and by Ginsburg implicitly, is constantly denied by their own discourses. The state is granted relative autonomy on the condition that, in the final analysis, it works to the advantage of the 'ruling class'/'capitalism'. Class struggle is given a degree of autonomy which is simultaneously denied in conceptions of the incorporation of the 'working class'. Despite attempts to build into their discourse a degree of indeterminacy and a space in which political discourse might calculate the effectivity of the class struggle, the work of theorists like Corrigan and Leonard, Ginsburg, and Gough collapses into various strands of essentialism. In the final analysis, the Welfare State is a reflection of the 'laws of motion' of 'capitalism'. 'Capitalism' produces contradictions which, in turn, 'cause' the reactions of class struggle and social policy. Though these 'effects' may, in turn, induce further 'crises', 'capitalism' as a structured totality merely finds further solutions. Discourse which is premised

on the general concept of the capitalist mode of production as a structured totality cannot accommodate concepts which allow the effective disturbance of that structure. Gough writes: "The autonomous dynamic of capitalism provides the starting point for a materialist analysis of the welfare state" (1979:32) and in so doing he denies the discursive possibility of breaking into that "dynamic". This is not simply a discursive problem for radicals in the welfare realm, however. As Hirst notes: "Given the concept of social totality and its movement Marxism has abolished for itself the space to mutate in relation to new political circumstances ..." (1979:7). Radical theorists, then, must come to terms with the contradictions of their own discourse.

"Either we effectively reduce political and ideological phenomena to class interests determined elsewhere (basically in the economy) - i.e. an economic reductionism coupled with a vague recognition that things are actually more complicated and a failure to get to grips with that complication. Or we must face up to the real autonomy of political and ideological phenomena and their irreducibility to manifestations of interests determined by the structure of the economy" (Hindess, 1977:104).

In the section which follows, this dilemma is given further consideration. Theorists who adopt, explicitly or implicitly, an epistemological framework which postulates knowing subjects with a privileged relationship (knowledge) with the objective world are obliged to identify these very subjects as the objects of their social analysis. Faculties cannot be denied to the individuals who fill class positions and encourage social change which are claimed by the theorists and social scientists who observe these phenomena.

3. Liberal Humanitarianism : Radical Humanism

Ginsburg's discourse would seem to follow the line of the so-called 'state derivation theorists' (Holloway and Picciotto, 1978; Hirst, 1979:164 et seq.) in its almost total subordination of the class struggle to the 'demands' of capital. Gough, as already discussed, seeks to give effectivity to the class struggle. Corrigan and Leonard discuss in more detail the implications of casting this effectivity in terms of subjective consciousness.

Taking their cue from Lenin, Corrigan and Leonard seek to differentiate between "objective class position" and "the subjective view of that position" (1978:83). Most 'working class' consciousness is 'trade union consciousness', that is, it takes the form of an awareness of conflict with "bosses" in employment. This is not the 'correct' consciousness required for the transformation to socialism (ibid.:88). For Corrigan and Leonard, social work can play a part in raising the required political consciousness and Leonard discusses this fully elsewhere (Leonard, 1975). What is required is a "Marxist psychology" (1978:118) which can provide a micro-sociology to accompany the macro-sociology they believe Marx, Engels, and Lenin have provided. What is required, they argue, is an exploration of the "dialectical" relationship between agency and structure and, in pursuit of this goal, they adopt Althusser's notion that "... an individual is always - already a subject, even before he is born" (Althusser, 1971; Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:121).

Althusser, of course, sought to abandon the historicist and humanist essentialist aspects of Marxist discourse by displacing the

'constitutive subject' integral to empiricist and rationalist epistemologies. In so doing, Hirst points out, Althusser had also to "... displace the classical conception of ideology as a false recognition of the real" (1979:57). Corrigan and Leonard, on the other hand, retain the psychological interpretations of consciousness which locate their discourse with traditional conceptions such as anomie, the internalization of norms, and so on. Unfortunately, as Hirst demonstrates, Althusser does not escape from the protocol of the subject which he submits to critique and it is understandable, therefore, how writers such as Corrigan and Leonard are able to import his discourse into their welfare texts.

For Althusser, subjects are constituted within the social totality. As aspects of the structure, subjects are constituted by and constitute the totality, they cannot, therefore, represent to themselves the conditions of their existence of which they are a part. Subjects, then, live their existences "as if" they were constitutive subjects. This is not to suggest that subjects do not have an impact on the world (Hirst, 1979:34). The "imaginary" relationship that subjects have with their conditions, is not, Althusser argues, a false representation of the real, the position supposed by the notion of false consciousness. In effect, Althusser moves reality one stage further away. To be a subject is to live in ideology. What Althusser describes as "a first and very schematic outline" (1971:150) Hirst describes as "nothing but an elaborate metaphor" (1979:64). Althusser simply cannot eradicate the concept of the constitutive subject as a knowing subject. Ideology, he argues, "recruits"

subjects from amongst individuals through a process of "interpellation" (1971:163). This "sensationalist theoretical form" (Hirst, 1979:65), which Althusser argues is simply a function of his "special mode of exposition", is counteracted by the claim that "individuals are always - already subjects" (1971:164). An infinite regress is, of course, created by such a concept in the fruitless search for the 'interpellator' who is not already a subject with the faculties required to form other subjects. "Althusser is in a circle not unlike that of Descartes' Cogito", argues Hirst, and like Descartes, Althusser effectively turns to God to terminate the regression. It is in the "specular" relationship between subject and Subject that the relationship between subject and relations of production can be found (1971:165 et seq.). "There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they 'work all by themselves'" (ibid.:169). It is the ideological state apparatuses that ensure that subjects 'work all by themselves', thereby ensuring the necessary reproduction of the relations of production. But, given this necessary effect and given the misrecognition within the imaginary relationship, Althusser's metaphor disguises a thesis of false consciousness (Althusser, 1971:170; Hirst, 1979:62-3). Althusser's rejection of the humanist perspective and the ultimate subordination of the superstructure to the demands of the economic system by his discourse, condemns his work to an economism. Nevertheless, Althusser has attempted to problematise Marxist conceptions of ideology and the state in ways which are largely sidestepped by other radical theorists. As a consequence of this

shortcoming, radical discourse on welfare often provides merely a parallel humanism to that which is apparent in liberal concentration on the humanitarian impulse in the evolution of the Welfare State.

Given the political and ideological conditions of existence of both liberal and radical discourses on welfare, it is understandable that conceptions of freedom, self-determination and respect for the individual should find their way into theoretical discourse in the form of an ontology of the subject ('free will'). It is, however, in the scientific pretensions of these discourses, as they claim to represent or reflect reality, that inconsistency arises. For a 'free will' which does not condemn discourse to relativism must be a bounded freedom: partial freedom, like relative autonomy proves a difficult compromise to accommodate in a 'scientific' discourse.

Liberal humanitarianism portrays the Welfare State as a pragmatic, utilitarian, or noble compromise between the excesses of an unbridled capitalism and the rigours of a total collectivism.

Hobman makes this point in blunt terms:

"The Welfare State is a compromise between the two extremes of Communism on the one hand, and unbridled Individualism on the other ..." (1953:1).

Mishra also defines contemporary "institutional" models of welfare policy as understandable in terms of "... a compromise between the residual and normative conceptions" (1977:13). Within liberal discourse, the compromise is the result of "British political genius" (Hobman, 1953:1); the "awakening of social conscience" (ibid.:7).

Both Mishra and Warham describe social administration as a 'normative discipline' because it is "... concerned as much with questions about what ought to be, as with examining what is ..." (Warham, 1973:194). Mishra compares social administration with the Marxist approach: both are concerned with intervention (1977:5). Pinker, in effect, endorses the view in his criticism of the belief, prevalent "... in British social policy and administration", that the values which support the economic system are antipathetic to the values which are implicit in welfare matters (1979:247). The "moral determinism" (Carrier and Kendall, 1973) of much liberal discourse on social policy has political and ideological conditions of existence in liberal conceptions of the 'good life', of a 'welfare society' (Robson, 1976; Titmuss, 1968:124 et seq.). Robson, whose discourse few are likely to describe as radical, would nevertheless seem to speak for many radicals when he writes that "... a welfare state, and still more a welfare society, cannot exist in an atmosphere of pessimism, gloom and despondency, in which the human predicament evokes feelings of contempt, hatred and despair" (1976:49). For a number of radical theorists, working on social policy and welfare discourse generally, the radicalisation of that discourse is seen to require a blending of liberal humanitarianism and Marxist structural analysis. Thus we find, for example, Mishra's production of a paper on "Marx and welfare" in which he aims "... to present an outline of Marx's theory of welfare ..." (1975:287).

Mishra acknowledges that "Marx's works do not offer an explicit theory of welfare" (ibid.). Rather than attempting to produce a

Marxist problematisation of welfare discourse based upon Marxist concepts, however, Mishra outlines what he sees as the "... essential ingredients of a general theory of welfare: a distinctive normative orientation with regard to social organisation and social relationships, and a concern with the relevant 'social facts'" (ibid.:288). This formulation he then 'applies' to the works of Marx. (19) For Mishra, welfare is essentially about socialism: "... welfare as a central social value can be institutionalised fully only in a classless society". Such a formulation, then, allows Mishra to present social policy, despite its shortcomings, as essentially socialist in character. Welfare legislation represents progress towards a socialist society. "By positing the communist and capitalist distributive norms as polar types - total welfare and total diswelfare - Marx dramatises the essence of welfare" (1975:292). But, if the Marxist position can be characterised as the commitment to "... a steady expansion of the frontiers of welfare until need-based distribution becomes the major component in distribution", then "... the distinction between the Marxian and the 'institutional' [liberal] notions of welfare turns out to be one of degree rather than kind" (1975:304). Despite this comment, however, Mishra's

19. Towards the end of the paper Mishra claims that his intention has been to draw attention to an aspect of Marx's work which appeared to have gone largely unnoticed. In a later work, Mishra (1977) incorporated this paper into a chapter on "The Marxist Perspective" in which he discusses Marx's position and the position of later Marxists which he sees differing mainly in emphasis (1977:75). Mishra, in effect, claims to identify a discursive regularity of welfare within Marxist discourse.

consideration of the perennial paradox - socialism within capitalism - leads him to a view which largely parallels the 'relative autonomy' thesis discussed earlier.

"Recent evidence ... shows the difficulty of institutionalising welfare even partially in a society whose dominant values and institutions remain capitalistic. The market forces continually reassert themselves, eroding the welfare state" (1975:306).

Mishra draws his ideal of socialist society from Marx's early humanist texts in which, Mishra maintains, Marx provided "... a sketch outline of a sociology of needs" (ibid.:291). What Marx neglected to analyse, he continues, was the problem of the "consciousness of need". Like Corrigan and Leonard, Mishra wants to humanise Marxist discourse through the utilization of sociological and psychological concepts. It is Mishra's essentialist interpretation of 'socialism' in terms of the satisfaction of human needs which allows him to place welfare discourse at the centre of Marxist discourse and to read its 'neglect' of the phenomenological perspective as a neglect of the early Marx.

In a similar fashion, the 'essential Marx' is sought by Lubasz in a paper examining "Marx's initial problematic: the problem of poverty" (1976). Although the paper has the virtue of illustrating the originality of Marx's work in his early days, the aim of the article is to identify elements which might allow for the homogenisation

of Marx's discourse as a whole. (20)

Lubasz takes Marx's initial problematic to reside in two articles written by Marx for the German newspaper Rheinische Zeitung in 1842 and 1843. Both articles deal with the problem of poverty. In "taking up the cause of the poor", Lubasz argues, Marx does so implicitly on a specific value premise:

"... that every human being, every member of human and not just of civil society, is entitled to a full-fledged human existence. This premise functions as a criterion: if an actually established system denies any class of human society such human existence, the system needs to be changed" (1976:30).

Like Mishra, who maintains that "... Marx unwittingly provides ... a theoretical concept against which the existing welfare arrangements ... can be measured" (1975:303), Lubasz identifies Marx's philosophy of Man as the measure of the 'good life', of socialist social organisation. Like the noble savage, the poor "... represent humanity in its elementary form, untainted by the distorting, dehumanizing effect which exclusive private property has on human beings ..." (Lubasz, 1976:31). In dealing with the "origins of Marxism", Lubasz seeks to link Marx's early humanist texts with his later political discourse on the 'capitalist mode of production'. To argue that in both problematics

20. There is, of course, a wealth of literature on the contrasts and similarities between the 'early' and the 'later' Marx. See, for example, Elliott's discussion of the Grundrisse as a link between the two 'Marxs' (1978). To search for the common factors in Marx's many writings is, of course, to search for the 'essential Marx' and is to confuse the motivations of an author with the discourse of his writings. To seek for the essence of Marxism in the gospel according to Marx is to privilege that discourse and to set it up as a religion rather than a discursive political formation.

Marx was concerned to view 'society' as a totality (ibid.:41) is not, however, to show that Marx's humanism is incorporated into his later work. What Lubasz does illustrate is that Marx's philosophy of Man was also a political discourse. The relationship between the poor and the state is, in Marx's early work, a relationship between individuals: poor people and government administrators. The failure of the state to recognise and meet the needs of the poor is a failure of administrators to see the world as the poor see it. This is not the 'fault' of administrators but, rather, an inevitable consequence of being an administrator. "The result is impasse. People and state are at odds, and yet are systematically separated from each other" (ibid.:37). Marx's political 'solution' is to present the free press as an intermediary between the private interest (the poor) and the public interest (the state). A solution, then, is to be found in the mediation between subjects: problem and solution reside in the human consciousness.

Lubasz ends his paper with a "look ahead", to the close of 1843. Althusser, however, suggests that soon after this period (1845) "... Marx broke radically with every theory that based history and politics on an essence of man" (1969:227). What is particularly fascinating for Althusser is that Marx begins to define humanism as an ideology but defines ideology as an integral category in the understanding of social formations.

"This rupture with every philosophical anthropology or humanism is no secondary detail; it is Marx's scientific discovery" (1969:227).

The importance of this "epistemological break" (21) to the discussion of both Mishra's and Lubasz's attempt to discover the 'essential Marx' is, in Althusser's words:

"... that Marx rejected the problematic of the earlier philosophy and adopted a new problematic in one and the same act. The earlier idealist ('bourgeois') philosophy depended ... on a problematic of human nature (or the essence of man)" (1969:227).

Presentations (George and Wilding, 1976:106 et seq.) and representations (Mishra, 1975) of radical discourse on social policy adopt empiricist and rationalist epistemologies in their leap from humanitarian notions about the essence of Man to the theoretical formulation of a political problem. If the motor-force of history is class struggle and if class is defined with reference to the individuals occupying objective historical positions (peasant; capitalist), then each individual must be said to carry the essence of his class. This, in turn, requires an empiricism (real individuals occupying class positions) and an idealism (class conflict as the essence of history; individuals as the essential facets of a class):

"If the essence of man is to be a universal attribute, it is essential that concrete subjects exist as absolute givers; this implies an empiricism of the subject. If these empirical individuals are to be men, it is essential that each carries ... the whole human essence ... this implies an idealism of the essence" (Althusser, 1969:228).

21. For Althusser, the "epistemological break" represents Marx's rejection of Hegelian and Feuerbachian forms of discourse. More generally, of course, the concept parallels Foucault's discussion of epistemes and discontinuities. For present purposes, it is sufficient to suggest that Marx's various texts build upon specific and often conflicting epistemological protocols. (See Brewster's "Glossary" of terms in his translation of Althusser, 1969.)

This is not to deny the authenticity of the humanitarian ideals held by commentators on welfare discourse but merely to question the consistency of the discourse they develop.

"On this condition it is possible to define humanism's status, and reject its theoretical pretensions while recognising its practical function as an ideology" (Althusser, 1969:229).

Marx's anti-humanism, Althusser strongly emphasises, is a "theoretical anti-humanism" (ibid.). Its effectivity is not in dispute: its effectiveness as radical discourse is.

For Foucault, the search for that Other-ness of Man, the unthought, the essence, is a feature of the Modern episteme (1970:326). Althusser says something similar in recounting Marx's comments on the notion of human nature as the essence of Man. The notion of human nature concealed a double value judgement: "... the 'inhuman' as much as the 'human' is a product of present conditions; it is their negative side" (Marx quoted by Althusser, 1969:236-7). "Bourgeois humanism made man the principle of all theory", writes Althusser, "This luminous essence of man was the visible counterpart to a shadowy inhumanity" (ibid.:237). For Althusser, as for Foucault to some degree, the essentialist characterisation of Man represents a critical element in discourse. Althusser, in fact, argues that a "socialist humanism" remains on the agenda for radical theorists as a substitute for an adequate Marxist interpretation. In terms of what I have described as the epistemological conditions of formation of a discursive regularity, radicals in the welfare realm have tended to

adopt a humanist ideology and an appropriate epistemological grounding of their discourse. As already suggested, this sociological mode of analysis draws an ontological distinction between agents and social structure and then proceeds to claim a degree of autonomy for human agency within the structure by attempting to bridge the "ontological gulf" between them. Foucault provides a provocative challenge to the humanistic science of Man: "Does man really exist?" he asks.

"In order to awaken thought from such a sleep ... there is no other way than to destroy the anthropological 'quadrilateral' in its very foundations [...] It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance. For this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think" (Foucault, 1970:341-2).

In similar terms, Althusser writes of Marx's use of the concept of 'real humanism' (22) as being a function of his attempt to direct discourse away from idealist abstractions about Man and towards Man as "the ensemble of the social relations". (23)

"... it is then that the shocking paradox appears: once this displacement has really been put into effect, once the scientific analysis of this real object has been undertaken, we discover that a knowledge of concrete (real) man, that is, a knowledge of the ensemble of the social relations is only possible on condition that we do completely without the theoretical services of the concept of man ..." (Althusser, 1969:243).

22. See, for example, The Holy Family (e.g. French Materialism and the Origins of Socialism; reproduced in McLellan, 1978:149-55).

23. Marx's Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach, McLellan (1978:157).

'Theoretical anti-humanism' does not, then, imply that concrete human beings do not exist, have an awareness of the world and a real impact on it. Nor does it suggest an attack on humanitarian ideals or a belief in the subordination of personality to the demands of the collectivity. The anti-humanism of Althusser and Foucault is, however, merely a de-centring of the subject within theoretical discourse. Althusser, as has already been suggested, fails to rid his discourse of the constitutive subject: Foucault simply ignores the tensions within his own discourse. The knowing subject is a condition of any epistemological protocol. Writers such as Gough and Corrigan and Leonard attempt to resolve the tensions between free will and determinism in their discourses through what they call a dialectical analysis. This usually means that the discourse contains an equal treatment of agency and structure in which each determines the other in a process. Like the theory of evolution, nothing can be said about which came first and the thin end of the telescope remains shrouded in mystery: in the beginning there was agency and structure. Others have identified this as the fundamental problem facing social theory, whilst for many it simply identifies the chasm between their version of social analysis and that practised by others (Mayhew, 1980:350). (24)

24. Ontologically, the greatest problem has usually been structure; after all most people acknowledge their own existence, but what exactly do we mean by 'structure'? As a consequence, 'the subject' has often been bracketed-out, as the constant factor, so that structural features of society (e.g. institutions) could be studied, or else structure has been seen as, ultimately, nothing more than reifications of the products of individual consciousnesses and, consequently, as explicable in those terms.

The "ontological gulf" is an effect within discourse. It is, for example, Althusser's conception of a 'real' realm which knowing subjects fail to grasp 'correctly' which creates an ontological distinction between subjects and the structure which determines them. Within that discourse, denial of the constitutive subject leaves Althusser open to the charge of structural determinism. This is the main point of attack of a paper by Layder, "Problems in accounting for the individual in Marxist - rationalist theoretical discourse" (1979). Marxist rationalists, including Hindess and Hirst, are castigated for portraying Man as a "cultural dope" and for postulating that the "... only valid objects of scientific inquiry are supra-individual, impersonal social forces or constraints" (1979:150). It is, of course, a misrepresentation to suggest that Hindess and Hirst even attempt to theorise "... the relation between (social) individuals and systematic constraints ..." let alone that they do this in terms of "... behavioural conformity to structural demands" (ibid.). Layder, in fact, restricts his references to Hirst's Durkheim, Bernard and Epistemology (1975) and Hindess' The Use of Official Statistics (1976), ignoring Hindess' and Hirst's joint publications (1975; 1977) and making only a passing reference to their work with Cutler et al (1977; 1978). These later texts, however, make Hindess' and Hirst's break with Althusserian rationalism very plain.

Layder attributes the Marxist - rationalist's error to an "unthinking adherence" to Marx's statement in Capital that he was dealing with individuals "only in so far as" they were

personifications of economic categories. Layder omits the remainder of this passage which is from Marx's 1867 "Preface" and which continues:

"My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them" (Marx, 1977:21).

It is understandable, then, if "certain Marxists ... treat individuals as if they were only personifications of economic categories" (Layder, 1979:151). Layder very rightly highlights the contradiction in much Marxist discourse between individuals who are both determined by their situation and may rise above it. Working within epistemology - he advocates "a correspondence theory of scientific knowledge" (1979:157) - Layder defines the Marxist - rationalist position as 'inadequate'; it fails to do justice to the reality of human agency. In its place, Layder wants to substitute the notion that "... the number of 'action' alternatives open to an individual ... is socially defined ..." but "... within these ... parameters ... the individual is free to choose amongst the ... alternatives" (1979:150). Layder's subjects are given the same freedom of choice given to the prisoner allowed to choose the method of his execution. In the section which follows, the impossibility of bridging the "ontological gulf" created by a discourse working within epistemological protocols will be illustrated through a discussion of Layder's paper and the work of Anthony Giddens.

4. Agency, Structure and the "Ontological Gulf"

Layder adopts a rationalist epistemology when he argues that a distinction must be made between levels of analysis (1979:152). The "social system or structural level of analysis", argues Layder, does not carry subjective attributes and can, apparently, be "completely disclosed by rationalistic determinations" (ibid.:157-8): social systems are the products of discourse. At the "action/system interface", however, one is faced by an "ontological gulf" (ibid.:158). The veracity of analysis at this level can only be "revealed by empirical practice" (ibid.:159). When it comes to agency, then, Layder is an agnostic; his social science can never be certain about how well its concepts correspond with reality.

Having created an ontological gulf - the fundamental question to be asked in Layder's discourse is "how individuals or groups of individuals in situated interaction are affected by or affect the wider systemic constraints" (ibid.:153) - Layder creates a methodological gulf to accompany it. He does not, however, make it clear how the concepts appropriate to "penetrate ... the action/system interface" are to be articulated with those which "pertain solely to the social system" (ibid.:157). Despite an interesting flirtation with the notion that theoretical discourse merely provides the general form of the conditions of existence of objects in discourse and cannot legislate the specificity and effectivity of the content of those forms

in determinate situations, (25) Layder's discourse relies on a series of very basic sociological notions. Taking his cue from Lockwood's "Social integration and system integration" (1964), society, for Layder, is "... a structured system ... functionally independent of specific actors ..." Individuals are born into this "ongoing system ... whose existence precedes them ..." (Layder, 1979: 159-60). Society, therefore, precedes the individual, determining his world, but it is individuals who reproduce society. The social system, then, is "both constraining and facilitative of social action" (ibid.:160). With this sociological platitude, Layder takes his reader into the hermeneutic and epistemological whirlpool of 'first philosophy' and the origins of 'sociation'.

The real, concrete world, in Layder's view, is the world of action and interaction. The real social scientific method of reflecting this reality is a rationalist approach in which concepts are "an abstract and rational form of the real" (ibid.:157). But, as Hindess says of this process of abstraction recommended by Willer and Willer and followed by Layder, "... if there has to be a correspondence between concepts and observationals, how does the abstractive relation between the two differ from the types of relations between observables

25. Layder writes: "Substantively embedded formal concepts can only be revealed by empirical practice (and not 'empiricist' practice) ... This exhortation ... is an appeal to rationalist forms of demonstration in the determination of the formal relevance of concepts describing social action ... on the understanding that such concepts are not simply deducible from those that determine their relevance" (1979:159). Working within epistemology, however, the relationship between concepts and objects of discourse in Layder's rationalist view is a relationship between "concepts and the concrete reality to which they refer" (ibid.).

postulated by empiricism?" (1977b:194). Despite claiming "a modified rationalist epistemology ... not tainted by empiricism or flawed by reductionism or subjectivism" (1979:157), we find that the human subject is at the centre of Layder's social world and is to be understood, according to the tenets of positivism, through observation of reality.

Much of Giddens' work over recent years has been dedicated to the reconciliation of theories about the acting subject and theories about wider social structures. Through his concept of "structuration" (1976:120 et seq; 1977:129-34; 1979:69 et seq.) Giddens has explored the view that agency and structure ought to be seen as a "duality" and not a "dualism". Sociological analysis is the focus of study on the "... instantiation of structure in the reproduction of social systems ..." argues Giddens (1979:106). Nevertheless, claims to the contrary, Giddens' analyses retain a consistent distinction between action and structure which are not simply discursive. Like Layder, Giddens wants to avoid the accusation of producing a subjectivist theory and yet he insists that the "... pressing task facing social theory today is ... to promote a recovery of the subject ..." (1979:44). The subject, in whatever form, is at the centre of Giddens' analyses. Connecting action and structure requires: "... a theory of the human agent, or of the subject; an account of the conditions and consequences of action; and an interpretation of 'structure' as somehow embroiled in both those conditions and consequences" (ibid.:49). In fact, however, 'structure' remains hedged-around by inverted commas throughout

Giddens' exposition. For whilst subjects have a corporeal existence and do not demand qualifying inverted commas, structures are merely "virtual orders" (ibid.:64) and exist "paradigmatically" only. Now, whilst Giddens maintains that this does not reduce structure to the status of a model, it does suggest that it is a concept which can only be studied through its concrete manifestations in human agency. Thus: structure is to be regarded as "... a virtual order of differences produced and reproduced in social interaction as its medium and outcome" (ibid.:3); structure requires recognition of "... (a) knowledge - as memory traces - of 'how things are to be done' ... on the part of social actors; (b) social practices organized through the recursive mobilisation of that knowledge; (c) capabilities that the production of those practices presupposes" (ibid.:64). Giddens' social theory is, then, fundamentally an action theory.

"Social systems are systems of social interaction: as such they involve the situated activities of human subjects ..." (1979:56).

Giddens' approach adopts an ontological distinction between "the subject (the actor)" and "the object (society)" which are to be considered as a duality because "the same structural characteristics participate" in both (ibid.:70). However, 'social systems are systems of social interaction' and society is produced and reproduced "as a skilled performance on the part of its members" (1976:160; 1979:114). The distinction between system and agency is, then, an intellectual sleight of hand which seeks to guard against accusations of reification -

systems and institutions are to be defined in terms of human behaviour (1979:66, 96), and of methodological individualism - "Social analysis must be founded neither in the consciousness or activities of the subject ..." (1979:120). Nevertheless, in a footnote reference to the "idiosyncratic contribution" of Cutler et al., Giddens acknowledges that a corporation can be a subject in law but counters - "... laws have to be interpreted and applied; it takes human agents to do that ..." (1979:272, note 86). Giddens is forced to universalise one side of his dualism and, in consequence, adopts a humanist essentialism. His acceptance of the neo-Kantian separation between social and natural science (1976:146) and adoption of the "... premises and values which science itself presupposes ..." (ibid.:140) result in a "realist epistemology" (1979:63) which must seriously cast doubt upon Giddens' claim to have 'separated' action and structure only in discourse, or as Giddens puts it, through utilization of "a methodological epoché" (1979:80, 95).

Giddens' universalisation of Man takes the form of a tentative exploration of a notion of the pre-conscious 'subject' which is not-yet-a-subject. Like Althusser, Giddens tries to step outside of the structured totality he has created in discourse by flirting with "... the theme that being precedes the subject-object relation in consciousness" (1979:39). And like Althusser, he utilizes Lacan's image of the "Mirror-Stage" (26) in theorising the development of the

26. Burton and Carlen characterise Lacan's "Mirror-Stage" as "... the existential capacity for recognising the specifics of lived experience as constitutive of reproducible self-identities" (1979:21, 23).

child (ibid.:120-22) and the formation of "tension-management" capabilities. Giddens pursues the essence of Man through a biological reductionism in which "a range of competencies" precede consciousness (ibid.:123). To avoid a biological determinism, Giddens argues that consciousness is something which emerges through the interaction of pre-conscious accomplishments and the social world. However, Giddens is then faced with the same problem of regression which met Althusser. Giddens asks, effectively, how do 'beings' become 'subjects'. Such a question demands an essentialist recitation of what it is to be a subject. That essence must reside as a programme within the being which is not yet a subject. As Hirst puts it in the context of Althusser's use of Lacan's metaphor: "The subject is internal to the specular structure, he is presupposed as a subject inside it" (1979:67).

Connecting action and structure, inter alia, through "an account of the conditions and consequences of action" means, in Giddens' formulation, "unacknowledged conditions" (1979:42, 70), for example, the unconscious and pre-conscious, and unintended consequences (27) which "chronically escape their initiator's intentions" (ibid.:44). Agency and structure are united, then, by concepts arising within the action system: structure exists only to the degree that the social world escapes a complete hegemonisation by rational control (the unconscious; the unpredictable; the Other). Giddens' subject

27. Giddens' discussion parallels what Gerth and Mills describe, with reference to Weber's social theory, as the "paradox of unintended consequences". See Gerth and Mills (Eds) From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology (1964:54).

attains a privileged status both empirically and theoretically. (28)

Social systems are systems of social interaction; social integration is "concerned with systemness on the level of face-to-face interaction"; system integration is "concerned with systemness on the level of relations between social systems or collectivities" (ibid.:76-7). What, then, distinguishes "social integration" from "system integration"? Nothing; for "... the systemness of social integration is fundamental to the systemness of society as a whole" (ibid.). Society is a totality; subjects are its atoms.

One consequence of such a formulation is what Mayhew (1981:630) calls the "appeal to complexity": every social event has a relevance and a consequence for a theory of social processes and change. Thus, for Giddens, the importance of his conception of "moment and totality" lies in the need to tie "... the most minor or trivial forms of social action to structural properties of the overall society (and, logically to the development of mankind as a whole)". (1979:71, 77). But this point is stultifying. It relies upon a conceptualisation of social change which fails to differentiate between its qualities and magnitudes. This is one consequence of Giddens' empiricist orientation which tends to view change as what happens as a contingent feature of human interaction (ibid.:114) rather than as intentional

28. Despite qualified support for the de-centring of the subject in some theoretical discourses: "The de-centring of the subject implies an escape from the philosophical standpoints which have taken consciousness as either a given, or transparent to itself" (Giddens, 1979:47).

calculation. Giddens' implicit allegiance to ethnomethodological principles is revealed in his analogy of language and society (ibid.:77, 114): "... language only exists in and through its reproduction ..." (ibid.:114). Similarly, society exists in and through its reproduction within social interaction. That being the case, however, we witness the paradox created by the "ontological gulf". Despite his defence of the integrity of the "lay actor", systemness happens behind the backs of its human agents. It is "practical consciousness" ("tacit stocks of knowledge") rather than "discursive consciousness" through which society is produced and reproduced. Giddens, like Layder, wants to suggest that human agency is free and yet contingent, but -

"... if it is free then its particular decisions can have no determinate conditions of existence. On the other hand if it is free only in the imaginary realms of consciousness, if in reality it is the creature of its social relations, then its 'freely made' decisions in fact dissolve into effects of the structure of the social formation. The social formation is then reduced to an expressive totality in which each of its agents merely express what is given in their perceptions of the whole. The structure is then a self-generating spiritual essence ... whose existence suffices to secure the totality of its conditions of existence. [...] Intermediate positions counterpose the freedom of subjectivity to the determinism of the structure, thereby taking on some of the fundamental problems of both polar types" (Cutler et al, 1977:273-4).

Giddens' discourse, like Layder's, simply cannot bridge the "ontological gulf" without one side of the equation denying the integrity of the other.

5. Summarising Discussion

This chapter has been used to illustrate the similarities of radical and liberal discourses on the Welfare State. Radical texts, which might be expected to offer a critical assessment of liberal discourse, in fact adopt the epistemological frameworks familiar to liberal texts. For both, the Welfare State and its institutions are events in the real world to be appropriated through empiricist or rationalist forms of scientific practice. It is maintained, however, following Hindess (e.g. 1977b:211 et seq.), that the protocol on which a discursive formation is based and the actual generation of that discourse must be considered separately. Specific liberal and radical texts have therefore been examined not simply to be condemned as empiricist or rationalist but for their internal consistency. Using the concept of essentialism, it has been suggested that the discourses in question adopt a mode of explanation which supposes a universal form, of which the 'social facts' examined embody its essence. The universals in question are not, however, theorised but represent a privileged realm against which 'social facts' are measured.

One form of this reductionism seeks for the essential character of the Welfare State through an analysis of its historical origins. History displays the teleological unfolding of a destiny. In its liberal form, the Welfare State is nothing but the culmination of a social evolution whose motor-force may be civilization, the humanitarian impulse, or utilitarian pragmatism. Radical histories deny these processes the power claimed by liberal discourse.

Analysing the same history and the same facts, the radical interpretations see the unfolding logic of modes of production. Social policy, then, is nothing more than a reflection of this process. What distinguishes these interpretations are their political and ideological conditions of existence. Whereas liberal discourse sees 'the facts' as representing a pragmatic compromise between unbridled 'capitalism' and a complete form of collectivism, radicals see them as signs of the class struggle and the 'ransom' paid by capital for a deradicalised 'working class'. In the event, however, both approaches endorse what has been called a 'convergence theory' which suggests that industrial nations tend to converge in their development as the dysfunctions and diswelfare which result from industrialisation are compensated for by an interventionist state.

The radical posturing of much discourse on 'capitalist welfare' seeks to refute the liberal suggestion that the Welfare State is an exercise in common sense. Far from being the result of healthy progress and public opinion, social policy arises from the dynamic force of 'capitalist' development. At its crudest, this economic reductionism interprets social policy in terms of its benefits to capital but a number of radical texts which openly challenge this determinism betray a discursive tension between economic determinism and the 'relative' free play of the state or of the class struggle which inevitably is resolved by a determination in the last instance by the economy. To the degree that such discourse insists upon the effectivity of the state and of class activity, however, it suggests a conspiratorial approach. Such a perspective adopts a

subjectivist philosophy in which human individuals represent and embody the essence of their class position. Social policy can then be interpreted as the victory won by the 'working class' from the 'ruling class' and as the instrument of incorporation and indoctrination of those 'working classes'.

Throughout these reductionist radical discourses we witness an insistent tension between a mode of analysis which, as social science, seeks to reflect the universal and generalisable features of the real world, and a desire to grant autonomy and effectivity to both acting subjects and social processes. And, in fact, such tensions are also obvious in liberal texts. At the same time, however, the radical pose adopted in many radical texts appears also in liberal commentaries. 'Capitalism' is often a common and easy target and liberal theorists legitimately adopt a radical stance when challenging the 'unacceptable face of capitalism'.

Given the ideological aims common to liberals and radicals, for example, freedom of expression, respect for the individual, and human rights generally, it is understandable that these ideals find their way into the epistemological and ontological protocols of both radical and liberal discourses. This is reflected in radical texts, in the popularity of the concepts of 'relative autonomy of the state' and 'ideological state apparatuses', as well as Althusser's work generally. Some time has, therefore, been spent in suggesting that in his work on ideology, Althusser does not rid his discourse of the tension between subject and object. In fact, Althusser's theory of ideology "... requires the concept of subject, a concept moreover which is not

theorised but simply incorporated as a necessity" (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:29). Althusser's discourse is incoherent because the concepts of 'structural causality' and 'constitutive subject' are incompatible.

What we see in a number of radical texts on welfare discourse is the 'humanising' of Marx; often through a utilization of Marx's early philosophical work. Radical humanism, then, becomes a parody of liberal humanitarianism. A radical humanism manifests itself as the discursive incorporation of 'relatively autonomous' individuals into a structure determined by the 'laws of capitalist development'. Once an ontological distinction, demanded by epistemology and encouraged by ideological commitment, is drawn between agency (acting individuals) and structure (capitalism; society) discourse embarks on the fruitless endeavour of bridging that "ontological gulf". That agency and structure cannot be articulated without giving one a determining role and denying the integrity of the other is illustrated through an examination of the theoretical discourse of Layder and of Giddens.

The discursive problem of reconciling agency and structure, free will and determinism is not peculiar to theoretical discourse on welfare but is a common feature of most social science discourse. For Foucault, it is the particular conception of Man as that "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" upon which the social sciences are based. Man is conceived to be both the architect of the social world and yet fashioned within its limits. To understand Man one must understand his determination by his origins: that which he is, essentially, in his cultural and biological histories. This "analytic of finitude", as Foucault calls it, this analysis of the dark

corners of Man's history and nature, are required because the "... contents that his knowledge reveals to him as exterior to him, and older than his own birth, anticipate him, overhang him with all their solidity, and traverse him as though he were merely an object of nature, a face doomed to be erased in the course of history" (Foucault, 1970:313).

In the analysis of Man's nature, the "analytic of finitude" pursues an empirical search for the genetic essence: it is a search for the Other which is also an "unveiling of the Same" (ibid.:340). The analysis of Man's history, in contrast, pursues an essence external to Man and by which his destiny is set. As an idealist discourse its project is chiliastic. Social science is the search "... for the locus of a discourse that would be neither of the order of reduction nor of the order of promise: a discourse whose tension would keep separate the empirical and the transcendental, while being directed at both ..." (ibid.:320). (29) Once Man is conceived as an object in the world and yet as the architect and guardian of that world, an "ontological gulf" is created which the logic of the discourse must maintain and yet seek to bridge. Man the scientific creator of the world is condemned to view himself and the world as "... an unavoidable duality ... readily interpreted as an abyssal region in man's nature, or a uniquely impregnable fortress in his history ..." (ibid.:326).

29. Burton and Carlen describe this tension as "... that dichotomy which has bedevilled social science and which, as 'determinism/free will' has been the dominating dichotomy of philosophical debate" (1979:26).

Theoretical discourse has its conditions of formation.

Social scientific discourses such as those reviewed in this chapter have specific ideological, theoretical and political conditions of existence upon which they base their veracity and effectivity. For example, epistemological claims that the discourse appropriates the objective condition of the 'working class' and can be used to calculate its destiny. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, these conditions will be described in this thesis as the epistemological conditions of existence of discourse. Foucault's description of the form taken by the social sciences since the beginning of the 19th century, and the "constituent models" of specific social science discourses, will be utilized in the analysis of welfare discourses and their conditions of existence.

Foucault is once said to have expressed regret for neglecting to undermine the "anti-humanist human sciences", along with their other forms, when writing The Order of Things (Dews, 1979:150). For Burton and Carlen, one of Foucault's major contributions has been the displacement of the "... human sciences' idealist and reactionary concern with the control of subjectivities" (1979:134). Certainly, in revealing the scientific pretensions of the social sciences, Foucault was not simply clearing the way for an anti-humanist analysis of social structure. Nor is his work "... the preliminary to rigorous human sciences based on the model of linguistics ... but to a 'liberation' from scientific discourse as such " (Dews, 1979:150). The social sciences, Foucault seeks to show, treat "... as their object what is in fact their condition of possibility" (1970:364).

In trying to answer questions such as - what is Man, what is it that defines subjectivity - the social sciences seek to reveal a Truth which only ever manifests itself in representations, as essences of that Truth. It is the epistemological presupposition that Man is both of the world and yet transcends it which provides the "condition of possibility" of a social science. As a consequence - "Whatever it touches it immediately causes to move". Analysis of one side of the equation of the "ontological gulf" results in a revision of premises formed on the other side which have implications, in turn, for the original analysis. Thus, borrowing from the empirical science of biology the notion of "functions", Foucault argues that the social sciences can view Man's phylogenetic adaptation to his environment. Generalisation of these "functions" allows average "norms" to be postulated. Similarly, from economics the social sciences borrow the notion of "conflict" of interests from which can be surmised the establishment of general "rules" of conduct. Finally, from the study of language and ideas Man's artefacts are shown to have meanings which, in the process of "signification", form "systems" (Foucault, 1970:356-7). What it is to be human is to be found in the dark regions represented by functions, conflict and symbols and yet such a symbolic order requires an existing organising system; conflict presumes rules which can be broken; adaptation requires the direction of a normative order. Social scientific analysis is caught in a bottomless whirlpool.

Both the liberal and radical discourses reviewed in this chapter are caught in this epistemological impasse. As Giddens records:

"... there are no easy dividing-lines to be drawn between Marxism and 'bourgeois social theory'. Whatever differences might exist between these, they share certain common deficiencies deriving from the context of their formation ..." (1979:1).

Radical theorists who seek to justify that label by pointing to the emphasis they give to the fundamentally conflictual nature of 'capitalism' and to their identification of the rules and norms through which the 'bourgeoisie' maintains its hegemony are led, ironically, to interpret that hegemony in terms of the functional requirements of 'capitalism'. 'Capitalism' then becomes a totality, a system, which gives meaning to the social relations which form it. Radicals and liberals take part in the same debate over the problem of order and the destiny of Man, they merely enter the debating chamber by different doors. That true identity of Man, his purity which, for so much 19th century thought, was being destroyed or diluted by industrialisation, was to be found in his nature or, as for Marx, in his relationship through 'labour' with nature. Discourse, then, was required to work backwards to uncover origins and forwards in anticipation of the recovery of Man's purity in his release from alienation. In the chapter which follows, the critique begun in this chapter will be directed towards certain fundamental concepts central to Marxist political discourse. Radical discourse on the Welfare State rests firmly on such concepts, for example, Marx's theory of value, the laws of capitalist accumulation, and the industrial reserve army, whilst ignoring the problems and tensions they manifest.

"In order to awaken thought from such a sleep -
so deep that thought experiences it paradoxically
as vigilance, so wholly does it confuse the
circularity of a dogmatism folded over upon itself
in order to find a basis for itself within itself
with the agility and anxiety of a radically
philosophical thought - in order to recall it to
the possibilities of its earliest dawning, there is
no other way than to destroy the anthropological
'quadrilateral' in its very foundations" (Foucault,
1970:341-2).

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CHAPTER 3

Social Formation, Form and Content : A Critique
of Marxist Essentialism

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was shown that both liberal and radical discourses on the Welfare State carried a degree of incoherence and internal tension. Concepts concerning the ontological status and effectivity of human subjects, for example, were incompatible with concepts describing the effectivity of structural social factors and economic systems. In addition, the conceptualisation of 'society' as a structured totality of levels or sub-systems suggested an organising principle whose universal character overrides the apparent autonomy of the levels. In effect, the specificity and effectivity of the state or of the class struggle were reduced to an essentialist reflection of that principle. These essentialist interpretations were, it was suggested, dependent upon specific epistemological conditions of existence. Both liberal and radical discourses shared epistemological protocols based upon theoretical discourse as social science. Both liberal and radical discourses also shared philosophical premises about the nature of Man and the alienation of that nature under 'capitalism'. The critique offered in Chapter 2, then, carried an indictment of failure against radical discourse for its lack of rigour in the critique of liberal discourse it purported to generate. As Cutler et al suggest (1977:316-7), radical discourse bases its critique

of liberal discourse on the view that the latter is merely reformist in contrast to radical discourse which seeks the overthrow of what it is that is essential to 'capitalism'. Radical discourse, then, rides upon an essentialisation of 'mode of production'. If, as the previous chapter has suggested, such essentialism cannot be sustained then social formations should not be conceived of in terms of a determining and essential structure. The radical nature of discourse on the Welfare State must be a matter of political calculation within determinate areas of struggle. Socialists must be concerned with the expansion of democratic control and cannot relegate such work as being merely reformist.

It is not, it must be insisted, being argued that radical discourse on welfare has got the answers wrong. Rather, it is being suggested that to cast the task as the search for 'answers', is to treat radical discourse as a scientific exercise. This 'scientific' analysis of the Welfare State, it is argued, has produced an incoherence and an intellectual myopia amongst radical theorists which has seriously impaired their understanding of, and influence upon, current political issues in the welfare realm.

Many of those who are seeking to radicalise welfare and social work (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978; Bolger et al, 1981; Simpkin, 1979) have drawn upon Marxist conceptions of the 'capitalist mode of production', the role of the state and the nature of the class struggle. Consequently, this chapter seeks to extend the critique from Chapter 2 to one or two of the fundamental premises of Marxist discourse which

these and other radicals accept without hesitation. Radicals must seriously question the value of Marxist concepts about capitalist relations of production and their conditions of existence for an understanding of welfare discourse.

As Jessop (1980) suggests, a great deal of rethinking has, of course, been going on in Marxist theoretical circles in recent years. In reaction to Marxist-Leninist reductionism, in which the state was seen simply as the repressive instrument of the economically dominant class, recent theorists have sought to emphasise the relative autonomy of: the state (Miliband, 1976, 1977); the ideological 'level' of the social formation (Althusser, 1971); and the law (often based on the work of Pashukanis; ⁽¹⁾ see Jessop, 1980:341). Such work has, however, remained faithful to Marxist liturgy. Despite attempts to conceive of the superstructural levels of a social formation in terms of their own specificity and effectivity they have, inevitably, also been seen as reflections of the dominant 'mode of production'. The social formation is conceived of as a structured totality in which the economy always has the role of "determination in the last instance" (Cutler et al, 1977:169). As Cutler and his

1. Pashukanis' work has had a significant influence on recent British Marxist theory (Warrington, 1981; Fine, 1979; Hirst, 1979); it will not, however, be necessary to review Pashukanis' discourse here. As Hirst shows, Pashukanis' rejection of the reduction of law to class oppression is replaced by another, the reduction of the legal form to the commodity form. Pashukanis' discourse is essentialist: he seeks the essence of law and finds it in the concept of right borne by juridic subjects. The "legal form" is coextensive with commodity exchange and law is reduced to a mere reflection of the requirements of commodity circulation whilst the juridic subject is reduced to the individual subject acting intersubjectively.

colleagues demonstrate, rejection of this mode of formulation of a social formation necessitates the rejection of many of the basic tenets of Marxist discourse. One of the most fundamental of these tenets is Marx's theory of value. Gough, speaking of the "contradictory" nature of the Welfare State, notes that the roots of this contradiction "lie within the capitalist mode of production". "This is a way of organising production", he continues, "whereby all individuals are subject to ... what Marx called 'the law of value'".

2. The Theory of Value

"Every child knows ... that the masses of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labour of society. That this necessity of the distribution of social labour in definite proportions cannot possibly be done away with by a particular form of social production but can only change the mode of its appearance, is self-evident. No natural law can be done away with. What can change in historically different circumstances is only the form in which these laws assert themselves" (Marx in correspondence with Kugelmann in 1868. McLellan, 1978:524).

In his 1859 "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx makes reference to his evolutionary theory of the development of modes of production (McLellan, 1978:388-91). In an 1873 "Afterword" to Capital, Marx quotes from a German review of Das Kapital in which the reviewer describes the way in which Marx demonstrates "... by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions ..." (Marx, 1977:27). What Marx presents, then, is a "natural law" of economic

development which works, as Marx says, "with iron necessity" (Marx's 1867 "Preface", 1977:19). The inevitability of this economic progression does not allow for particular "determinate orders" to be omitted "by bold leaps", or to be "removed by legal enactments" (ibid.:20). Nevertheless, within each 'order' there are specific laws, that is, the natural law of historical development takes specific historical forms. Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production is the analysis of one specific form of that natural law and is Marx's unique contribution to 19th century social theory. Social laws, unlike the natural laws of physics, do not remain constant throughout history but are subject to particular discontinuities. And yet Marx's break with the political economy he took to task is clearly not complete for, if natural laws of historical development cannot "be done away with", if they merely change their "form", then they must retain an essential presence throughout their history. Marx rejects any reduction of historical development to the will and consciousness of subjects - "It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but ... their social being that determines their consciousness" (1859 "Preface"), however, as Cutler et al suggest:

"Only the supposition of a trans-historical subject can ground or provide the origin for this trans-historical process. The process ... requires the supposition that the successive associations of producers (economic systems) are in some way united ... that it is the process of development of something. That something is humanity ..." (1977:139-40).

Foucault uses changes in economic discourse to illustrate the discontinuity which he maintains occurred towards the end of the 18th century and, in particular, draws attention to the originality of Adam Smith's work on 'value'. Throughout what Foucault terms the Classical episteme, 'labour expended' represented human need for nourishment, shelter and satisfaction, that is, value was measured in terms of utility. Smith, however, identified the absolute nature of labour as a measure of the 'toil and trouble' invested in production (Foucault, 1970:222-3; Cutler et al, 1977:24). In terms of the epistemological conditions Foucault sets down for the Classical period, however, Smith's measure of value was a convention, a social agreement to bring order and standardisation to utility, toil and trouble. Labour had a universal character because it had been "present at the rude beginnings of society" (Cutler et al, 1977: 27). Within the Classical conception, there existed a finite world of objects which were represented in knowledge; they occupied what Foucault describes as a "fundamental space of a table which presented all possibilities in advance ..." (1970:218). Wealth, then, was not so much produced as discovered. (2) For Foucault, it was Ricardo who made the real break with the epistemological conditions of the Classical conception of value. With Ricardo, labour ceased merely to be a sign representing value and became the source of wealth.

2. Wealth was whatever was "the object of needs and desires" (Foucault, 1970:175). Coinage, for example, unlike the mediaeval conception in which it had intrinsic value as precious metal, was merely a conventional standard representing value determined elsewhere.

The measurement of wealth was no longer to be subjectively based upon utility but upon the objective reality of the labour expended to produce commodities (Cutler et al, 1977:24). The production of wealth, then, could also be conceived of in terms of its historical accumulation and development.

It was Marx who explored the implications of this historicism. Marx asks of Ricardo why it is that commodities exchange according to the labour time invested in them. "Political Economy ...", wrote Marx, "has never once asked the question why labour is represented by the value of its product ..." (1977:84-5). What Marx challenged was the belief that this commodity form of equivalence, based upon labour time, was a universal historical form. For Marx, every social formation must divide labour in such a way as to guarantee its reproduction. Equivalence in exchange was the form this 'general law' took under simple commodity production (Cutler et al, 1977:26-7). Exchange value is the phenomenal form of a universal law: exchange value guarantees a specific division of labour. Foucault characterises the epistemological protocol of the Modern episteme as the mode of discovery of the internal laws of "organic structure" (1970:218). Marx's conception of the relation between exchange value and universal law takes this epistemological form, for "exchange value cannot be anything other than the mode of expression, the 'form of appearance' ... of a content distinguishable from it" (Marx, quoted by Cutler et al, 1977:13).

Marx viewed exchange as an equation. If shoes could be exchanged for coal, then a common factor was required to make these different

objects equivalent. That common factor was labour time. It is not the objects which are equivalent but that which is essential to both. But, as Cutler et al point out, there is nothing inevitable about this conceptualisation (1977:13-14), for example marginalist theory suggests that value is relative (subjective). Marx, then, produces an essentialist theory of exchange on which are based a number of conceptions fundamental to his critique of political economy and capitalist relations of production. Rejection of these essentialist premises does, then, have serious implications for Marxist discourse generally and for radical critiques of welfare and social work which utilize that discourse. For example, the hegemonisation of value by the concept of labour time provides Marxist discourse with its explanation of the origin of profit. The 'capitalist' adds no labour time to the commodities produced (Marx, 1977:185 et seq.). The 'capitalist' buys labour power as a commodity at the price of its production (the labourer's basic needs) and, thereby, exercises full control of ownership of that commodity. By, for example, extending working hours, the 'capitalist' exploits the labour power he has purchased and from this surplus labour is able to generate surplus value. It is from this surplus value that profit arises, for the labourer has generated more value than the amount for which he was paid.

"... the past labour that is embodied in the labour-power, and the living labour that it can call into action ... are two totally different things. The former determines the exchange-value of the labour power, the latter is its use-value" (Marx, 1977:188).

Rejection of this essentialist conception of a 'capitalism' based on the exchange of equivalents measured in terms of labour time is to reject the view that: profit has only one source; wages are dictated by the cost of reproducing labour power; labour is necessarily exploited through the extraction of surplus labour; production can be reduced entirely to the efforts of labour.

Marx's thesis on the specificity of the forms taken by general laws of historical development challenges the view that the content of history can simply be read off from the general laws. Nevertheless, the thesis is merely a more complex conception of socio-economic evolution. Political intervention within such a process can merely "shorten and lessen the birth-pangs" (Marx, 1977: 20) in any transition to a new mode of production.

"Marxism is threatened by any radical accommodation to new conditions of calculation precisely because it has claimed to have established the possible conditions and determined at the most general level the necessary states of affairs" (Hirst, 1979:7).

3. Capitalist Accumulation and the Industrial Reserve Army

"The more extensive ... the Lazarus-layers of the working-class, and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism. This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation" (Marx, 1977:603).

"The industrial reserve army ... exerts downward pressure on wages and prevents the value of labour power rising to absorb the whole of surplus value" (Gough, 1979:25-6).

In Chapters 25 and 32 of Capital, Volume One, Marx outlines the process of the transition from the capitalist to the socialist mode of production. Central to the process is the accumulation of capital as one manifestation of the inevitably increasing productivity of labour. As capital accumulates, constant capital (machinery; factories; etc.) increases at the expense of variable capital (wages) because of growing efficiency in the utilization of labour power and technological innovation. Production on such a large scale puts smaller enterprises out of business and, as a consequence, accumulation and centralisation go hand in hand. In addition, fewer labourers are required and a "relative surplus-population" is produced "to an always increasing extent" (Marx, 1977:591). This surplus forms the 'industrial reserve army' as a "condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production" (ibid.:592). The reserve fulfills a number of functions for capital: it provides a reserve of labour which is required as capital opens up new areas for investment; and it acts as a buffer against pressure from organised labour to increase wages. Certain consequences also flow from the existence of this surplus, in particular, a "stagnant" pool of labour, characterised by irregular employment, and three categories of paupers: the able-bodied unemployed; pauper and orphan children; and "the demoralised and ragged and those unable to work". Pauperism, then, "... forms a condition of capitalist production ... It enters into the faux frais of capitalist production ..." (ibid.:600-3).

'Capitalist' accumulation represents 'capitalism' in evolution. Accumulation produces and requires an 'industrial reserve army' of

labour which, in turn, swells the ranks of paupers. "This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation", insists Marx, who presents us with the mechanism between whose folds lies the immanent contradiction between forces and relations of production under 'capitalist' production. The final moments, the "negation of the negation", however, remain unclear. Socialist production is to arise through the metamorphosis of 'capitalism'. Like the butterfly struggling to escape from its caterpillar form, socialism will burst its "capitalist integument". The final moments are swift. 'Capitalist' accumulation has "socialised production" in terms of the centralisation and concentration of production and it has created a new, mass, ruling class in the proletariat (Marx, 1977: 715).

To theorise a contradiction between forces and relations of production is to distinguish between the concept of forces and that of relations. As the mechanism of change, Marx subordinates relations to forces of production. (3) As Cutler and his colleagues record, to this presumption, Marx adds the proposition: that centralisation and concentration of production occurs in all branches of the economy; that such a condition results in a situation which is incompatible with private property, that is, the "socialisation" of production; and that, as a consequence, a unity of purpose is effected amongst the working population (Cutler et al, 1977:147-53). These propositions depend

3. In his 1859 "Preface" Marx writes that "... higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself". (See McLellan, 1978:390).

upon Marx's essentialist characterisation of history as a trans-historical process of production within which Man evolves in his social relations. As Foucault puts it, the Modern episteme represents history in terms of "fixed forms of a succession which proceeds from analogy to analogy" (1970:218). Marx's "analytic of finitude", to use Foucault's expression, portrays Man's subjugation to History. Marx's eschatology reveals what Foucault terms the "immobilization of History" (ibid.:259). The law of 'capitalist' accumulation leads, ultimately, to Man's recognition of his finitude; to the proletariat's recognition of its role as a class "for itself". "This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close" declares Marx (1859 "Preface", McLellan, 1978: 390). (4) But, as Cutler et al argue, Marx's concepts do not necessarily dictate the course his discourse takes and can be shown to lead to quite different conclusions. By seeking universal laws of social evolution, Marx's discourse enters the realm of prophecy.

Rejection of Marx's trans-historical laws means the rejection of a number of basic premises which many radical theorists have accepted unquestioningly. The concept of contradiction cannot be accepted in its essentialist form. The form of separation of labour-power from the means of production (as labour and capital within 'capitalism') should not be conceived of as a universal and constant contradiction

4. If this is the radical form through which the "immobilization of History" is portrayed, Foucault also gives us the liberal form according to Ricardo. Under this form, the evolution of society leads ultimately to a state in which production and population are in equilibrium; production can be taken no further and an increased population cannot be maintained.

breaking out, occasionally, here as an economic crisis, there as class conflict and, ultimately, bursting forth in a final confrontation (as revolution; the negation of the negation; or as the final contradiction between the capitalist integument and the socialist relations of production). Such thinking leads to what Hirst calls "The withdrawal into the prediction of crises" (1979: 7). (5) Social analysis should not be condemned to the increasingly subtle, and yet fruitless, search for tell-tale signs of the 'fundamental contradiction': the search for the Same through a revelation of the Other.

The traditional conception of the transformation of 'capitalism-in-general' into 'socialism-in-general' as an historical necessity, condemns radical discourse to the perpetual exegesis of Marxist texts in the search for 'explanations' for the delay in the demise of determinate 'capitalist' social formations. Similarly, it is fruitless to view the 'working class' as the inevitable embodiment of the 'fundamental contradiction' and the catalyst of revolution and change. (6)

5. Habermas' Legitimation Crisis adopts a subjectivist definition of 'crisis'. Structurally inherent contradictions must be experienced as contradictions by members of society before they can be treated as crises (1976:2-3). This dual role of structural contradiction and human recognition plays an active part in radical welfare and social work discourse. Taylor, for example, speaks of "the deepening crisis of capitalism" but also of the need for an "alternative socialist consciousness" (Pritchard and Taylor, 1978:126).

6. Corrigan and Leonard note that the success of the Marxist approach to social work outlined in their book depends on how closely it is "tied to the major forces within the British working class". Those "... groups who want to create any large-scale change must ally themselves with one of the two major classes ... the ruling class or the working class" (1978:142).

4. Economic Classes and the Class Struggle

"With me ... the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought" (Marx, 1873, "Afterword" to Capital).

"Individuals are born into a world which they ... did not make and which is presented to them as a 'natural' existence ... life chances and opportunities are assigned to them by ... their class ..." (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:120).

"... man is governed by labour, life, and language: his concrete existence finds its determinations in them ... he, as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own necessarily subjacent density ..." (Foucault, 1970:313).

Marx's scientific method, his emphasis on examination of the 'materialist basis' (Bottomore and Rubel, 1971:36), is very much a reflection of the epistemological condition which Foucault ascribes to the Modern episteme. To say with Bottomore and Rubel that Marx was not concerned with the theory of knowledge (ibid.) is not to say that he did not work within specific epistemological conditions. Both Cutler et al (1977:107 et seq.) and Althusser (1969:182 et seq.) spend some time dealing with Marx's explicit epistemological discussion in his 1857 "Introduction" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Cutler et al, for example, maintain that A Contribution, Grundrisse and Capital were written under the sign of the same epistemology (ibid.:107). Within such a framework, knowledge is not a process in which the mind represents to itself the

objective world as an ordered "taxinomia" (Foucault, 1970:218), a tabulation of identities and differences, but rather it is a process of direct acquisition of that world. The material reality is a world of organic structures. Rather than a finite tableau of the known and the knowable, it is an organic whole of unknown dimensions linked by analogy and succession (Foucault, *ibid.*). Marx's epistemology has been described as the 'appropriation of the concrete in thought'. (7)

Within any epistemology, separate ontological status is given to the object and the subject. Within Marx's analysis, no distortion arises in the process of appropriation by the subject of the object: there is no problem of representation. As Cutler *et al* put it: "It is the products which correspond and not the processes; the process of reasoning ... does not mirror the history of the concrete. The concrete [that] thought appropriates is a totality ..." (1977:110). It is Marx's conception of the real world as a structured totality, an ordered whole, which allows him to appropriate it in thought. The concrete that Marx appropriates in abstraction in his analysis of 'capitalism' is not, for example, English 'capitalism',

7. Marx writes: "It would appear to be correct to start with the real and concrete ... However, a closer look reveals that this is false ... The concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of many determinations ... That is why it appears in thought as a process of synthesis ... (in scientific method) abstract determinations lead to the reproduction of the concrete via the path of thought ... the method which consists of rising from the abstract to the concrete is merely the way thought appropriates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete in thought" ("Introduction" to A Contribution, quoted by Althusser, 1969:185-6, footnote 22).

it is 'capitalism-in-general'. To be otherwise, Marx's method would be merely a comparative empiricism. 'Capitalism-in-general' is a "concrete-reality" (Althusser) which thought appropriates as a "concrete-in-thought".

Layder (1979:151) has argued that Marx's statement in the 1867 "Preface" to Capital that "... individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests" does not imply that individuals were to be treated as if they were only personifications. For Layder, Marx is describing "an analytic strategy adopted on purely pragmatic grounds" (ibid.). As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Layder ignores the remainder of the passage from Marx, whose theory of historical causality - historical materialism - requires a view of human subjects as beings constituted by the economic system into which they are born. In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels wrote:

"The first premiss of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature" (McLellan, 1978:160).

Marx's interest is in social relations which are determined in their form by the economy.

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will ... The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness" (1859 "Preface" to A Contribution, McLellan, 1978:389).

These "definite forms" are ideological, but they are not mere phantoms because, determined by the economy, they are perceived as the sum-total of reality. Nevertheless, Marx seeks to show that these forms are the phenomenal appearances of natural laws: fetishism of the commodity, for example, hides from men the social character of their labour. Marx's many criticisms of bourgeois economists, then, is a criticism of their Classical epistemology: they mistake representations (forms) for constant aspects of a universal order. They fail to delve into the organic depths of history: the limits of their knowledge is the limit of the phenomenal form.

As with Althusser's conception of the human subject discussed in the previous chapter, Marx's subject must have the capacity to experience phenomenal forms. "For capitalism thus to impose itself in general men must be conceivable in general ..." (Cutler et al, 1977: 118). Given the conception of the subject as constituted by the economic system, which is always determinant in the last instance, how can this be reconciled with the Marxist conception of the effectivity of class struggle?

First of all, classes are defined in terms of the relations of

production within specific modes of production. Secondly, the basic antagonism, defined by these relations of production, between categories of economic agents (proletariat and bourgeoisie, for example) is reflected as conflict at the superstructural level (culturally; politically; legally). But, as Cutler et al make very clear, if the superstructural level is merely epiphenomenal, if it is determined in the last instance by the economic base, then the class struggle has no real effectivity and can be reduced to the working-out of the class relations at the level of the economy. If, however, political and cultural forces do have real effects, then the relation between classes qua economic agents and classes qua political forces must be clearly theorised (Cutler et al, 1977:184). The theoretical tensions this mode of analysis has engendered, the problem of reconciling structure and agency, the forces and relations of production, and so on, have already been illustrated in the previous chapter. For Cutler and his co-authors, "The difficulty here is endemic to the Marxist theory of classes and of class-relations" (ibid.). Marxists, they note, have attempted to avoid economic reductionism by suggesting that political forces represent the class interests of economic agents (ibid.:233). Class essentialism is substituted for an economic essentialism. To 'represent' class interests is to necessarily partake of the essence of the fundamental antagonism which is a feature of all class societies.

Essentialisation of classes and class struggle creates an additional problem for Marxist discourse which has a particular

relevance for theorists concerned to understand the public realm of welfare services. Ultimately, the logic of 'capitalist' accumulation will lead to the polarisation of class antagonism. In the meantime, classes such as the petty-bourgeoisie must, in some sense, embody the essence of the class struggle; if they do not, then they must have a political effectivity separate from the dictates of the economy. If the latter is true, Marxist discourse does not provide any theorisation of this effectivity. In fact, within radical discourse on social work and welfare generally we find solutions to this dilemma being sought through both channels. Utilization of the concept of "proletarianisation" has allowed radical discourse to equate the lot of the basic-grade welfare worker with that of the 'working class' (Bolger et al, 1981:67 et seq.). On the other hand, strong emphasis is placed in all radical welfare texts on the necessity of an alliance between welfare workers and the organs of the labour movement. These are issues that will be taken up in the final chapters of this thesis when 'radical social work' will be examined as a political force for social change. For the moment, it is sufficient to notice the conflict between Marxist interpretations of class interests determined by the economy and Marxist interpretations of these interests as reflections of the motivations and desires of human subjects. Along with the rejection of economism must go the refusal to accept simplistic formulae which glorify the 'working class' as productive labour and as the inevitable force of progressive change.

5. A Conspectus

The critique of Marxist essentialism, briefly outlined in earlier sections, has sought to concentrate upon fundamental inconsistencies and cannot be dismissed simply as hair-splitting. In terms of what Hindess calls the 'hierarchy of concepts' (1977b: 224 et seq.), attention has been directed towards the logical consistency of Marxist discourse and the location of its inconsistencies within its fundamental concepts. This is not to argue that such concepts are the essential nature of the discourse, merely that they are its logical cornerstones. "There is a hierarchy of concepts to the extent that the formation of certain concepts of a discourse depends on, or 'presupposes', certain other concepts" (Hindess, 1977b:225; and see Hindess and Hirst, 1977:30-33). What are the implications for a radical discourse on welfare of the rejection of these basic concepts?

(i) Historical Analysis. With the rejection of the analysis of history as linear, evolutionary or necessarily progressive, the forms of appearance of determinate economic, legal, cultural, or political conditions cannot simply be read as being representative of universal, trans-historical constants (laws). The circumstances of the labouring population and of paupers in the 17th and 18th centuries cannot, therefore, be interpreted teleologically as being determined by the future needs of 'capitalist' production.

(ii) Laws of Tendency. The various tendential laws (operating generally through history and specifically in forms appropriate to individual modes of production), which Marx describes, must be rejected.

There can be no inevitable progression of social formations from 'feudal' to 'capitalist' to 'socialist' modes-in-general, nor can 'capitalism-in-general' be usefully conceived as destined to progress from, say, 'primitive accumulation' to 'advanced capitalism' (Ginsburg, 1979:29-30). To say, as Gough does, that "The tendencies towards ever-greater concentration and centralisation of capital are among the most prescient of Marx's predictions. The ... multinational corporations spanning the globe represent the latest stage of this process" (1979:27), is to endorse dogmatism. Either such 'tendencies' specify the future and make all else redundant or they are merely one set of logical predictions amongst others and carry no privileged status.

In offering Marxist critiques of the Welfare State, many of the theorists reviewed in this thesis glorify the labour process as the essence of production. In so doing they also accept uncritically that within capitalist relations of production this centrality is denied, resulting in a 'fundamental contradiction' and endemic 'crisis'. "That the welfare state in Britain is in a condition of profound crisis is no longer to be seriously questioned", asserts Leonard (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:vii). Acceptance of this 'fundamental contradiction' leads to the question - "Does not capitalism beget its own Frankenstein - the modern working class - which can raise wages ...?" (Gough, 1979:25). An answer to the question is found in the concept of the 'industrial reserve army' which "... exerts downward pressure on wages". This 'reserve' is continually recreated, argues Gough, by technological innovation (ibid.:26). 'Capitalist' accumulation, then,

creates a surplus population which is functionally demanded anyway. The Welfare State maintains and reproduces this surplus population (ibid.:48). 'Capitalist' accumulation, then, produces and requires a Welfare State. Gough's thesis endorses economism. Ginsburg's position is similar. For Ginsburg, the social security system reproduces the reserve army (1979:2); for example, between the wars "an inflated labour reserve army ... performed the classic function of holding down wages and dividing the working class" (ibid.:33). The identity of the 'working class' as a class 'for itself' is, then, a process frustrated by the existence of the 'reserve army'.

To refuse the essentialisation of the labour process is to deconstruct the series of concepts which Marxists build on its foundation. To also question Marx's scientistic laws of tendency is to threaten a number of radical analyses of the Welfare State, whether they adopt a 'capitalist accumulation' or a 'value theory of labour' trajectory. (8)

(iii) Class and Class Conflict

"Many contemporary justifications of the law of value are at bottom philosophical/anthropological.

8. Cottrell (1981) has rebuked Cutler et al on the ground that, despite their claim that discourse cannot be reduced to the protocol which purports to organise it, they appear to dismiss all that Marx had to say on value because its essentialist basis cannot be accepted. Cottrell argues for Marx's value theory on the basis of "its ideological effects at the time" (ibid.:240). Initially, of course, the critique is directed against the consistency or otherwise of the discourse. Marx's value theory is not rejected merely as essentialist but as being incoherent with other concepts within the discourse. Besides, as Cutler et al argue, economic determinism "... is a weapon from a conflict long since resolved, a conflict against spiritualistic philosophies of history" (1977:132).

They entail the conception of human labour in the 1844 Manuscripts. They refer us back to the notion of man as his own product, and to labour as an activity which is ontologically unique ..." (Cutler et al., 1977:43).

Rejection of the law of value, of the ontological privileging of productive labour and its consequent glorification of the 'working class', entails rejection of the dogmatic notion of exploitation of labour power. As Cutler and his colleagues argue, production is a process in which labour, machinery and knowledge can all play a part and to which the 'capitalist' can contribute direction and coordination (1977:44). To question the ontological primacy of 'labour' and the 'working class' is to question the basis upon which a number of radicals build a conception of social work as a process for raising 'socialist consciousness' amongst the 'industrial reserve army' and, thereby, furthering the cause of 'socialism'.

Marxism has always been faced with the tension of a proletariat, as the inheritors of socialism, whose dictatorship "... only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes ...", and the laws of 'capitalist accumulation' which determine that 'working class' revolt must await the moment when "The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production ..." (Capital, 1977:715). Rejection of the strictures of such 'laws', a rejection implicit, in fact, in much of Marx's own work on the effectivity of 'working class' struggle to improve working conditions, has led a number of theorists to argue that the 'working class' can, indeed, work towards 'socialism' but only if its members gain a consciousness of their

position which is not merely one of a class 'in itself' but as a class 'for itself'. (9) For some, social work can provide guidance and act as a catalyst in the formation of 'working class' consciousness of its historic mission. Leonard spells this out in his discussion of Friere's use of 'conscientization' and its applicability to social work practice. The "key task of radical practice", Leonard argues, "is an educational one" (1975:57). 'Conscientization', or liberating education, as practised by social workers would contribute towards developing in clients "a critical consciousness of their oppression, and of their potential, with others, of combating this oppression" (ibid.). With Corrigan, Leonard is more specific about the target for 'conscientization': it is members of the working class who, like the bourgeoisie, "actually create history; they make revolutions and in the last analysis create socialism" (1978: 4). Corrigan and Leonard move on to describe working class consciousness, on the basis of Lenin's What is to be Done?, as "subordinate" consciousness. The task for social work becomes one of working within this limited awareness, with the hope, presumably, of raising it to "political class consciousness" (Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:87-8). Corrigan's and Leonard's "Marxist Approach" to social work, then, offers words of encouragement to the radical social worker: "What seems a long six months' period to Pauline is a very short time

9. Giddens, for example, distinguishes between "class-awareness" and "class consciousness" and divides the latter into: the awareness of class differentiation; the awareness of opposition of interests ("class conflict"); and the recognition of "the possibility of an overall reorganisation in the institutional mediation of power ... through class action" ("revolutionary class consciousness") (Giddens, 1973:112-3).

in the transformation of capitalism" (ibid.:22); "... there are no short cuts for political struggle ... The working class understand this ..." (ibid.:30). In the face of economic determinism, all that such radical discourse can offer is chiliasm and eschatology.

Class essentialism portrays a 'working class' with a common identity - its essence; an identity which is reflected in the activities and motivations of 'working class' movements. This is also an identity which can be shared by "allies" of the 'working class' (Pritchard and Taylor, 1978:105) and by welfare claimants' organisations (Ginsburg, 1979:106). But, to argue that the effectivity of this political force cannot be reduced to determination by the economic level is to argue either that economic class interests can be represented by parties, unions or whatever (they partake of the essence), or that there is no intrinsic link between class and organisation. Rejection of class essentialism requires acceptance of this latter proposition. As Cutler et al observe, "the notion of representation merely involves a complicated economism" (1977:235). They continue:

"Either political and ideological forces are reducible to classes or fractions of classes or they are not. To deny economism is to reject the classical conception of the economic-political-ideological unity of classes. It is to maintain that political and ideological struggles cannot be conceived as the struggles of economic classes. There is no middle way" (ibid.:236).

As Marxist commentators frequently emphasise, of course, although Marx was intent upon revealing the ideological character of bourgeois

political economy, which fetishised phenomenal forms into laws of nature, he did not seek merely to expose these forms as mystifications: bourgeois ideological forms had specific and potent effects. (10) Thus, the 'fundamental contradiction' between the socialised nature of production and the privatised ownership of the means and conditions of production, is said to be disguised within 'capitalism' by a vacuous ideology of freedom and equality (the labourer enters 'freely' into a contract with the 'capitalist' in an open market) and through the fetishization of the product as commodity (the 'capitalist' appears to make his profit from the sale of an object - the commodity, whereas he actually makes it through exploitation of surplus, unpaid labour). Given the tendency for Marxists to see the social formation as a 'structured totality' which contains the necessary conditions for its existence, and given the corollary condition that "The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas", it is clear that the labourer is either simply the bearer of certain social forms or he is a consciousness to whom the 'truth' of his situation can be revealed. If the latter, then there must be a mechanism which maintains the labourer in his 'false consciousness'; a mechanism which has been variously discerned in the law, culture, religion, the state and, generically in the 'ideological state apparatuses'. Within this mechanism, welfare work easily becomes identified as an agency of 'capitalist control', a point which has been made by sociologists, and particularly sociologists of deviance, for a number of years (Cohen, 1975).

10. As Ellen Meiksins Wood has it: Marx adopted the categories of bourgeois political economy "... as his point of departure precisely because they expressed, not a universal truth, but a historical reality in capitalist society, at least a 'real appearance'. The point was to decipher the real meaning of the 'appearance' ..." (1981:69).

The conspiracy thus perpetrated is often described in Marxist discourse as the separation of the economic from the political. (11)
The task for the radical becomes one of making the 'working class' aware of this ideological separation.

Despite the gesture to voluntarism in radical discourse, and particularly that in the welfare realm, it is the economic contradiction which really gives motion to history. For Habermas, for example, it is the nature of the economic crisis which forces a recoupling of the economic and political realms as the state takes an ever increasing role in steering the national economy; only then is there a legitimisation crisis (1976:36).

At best, then, the effectivity of the class struggle is allocated a residual role in much Marxist discourse. The apotheosis of the proletariat is denied by a conspiracy which neutralises and deradicalises. For Hearn, "the historical roots of one-dimensionality" and "the conditions which led to the depoliticization ... of the English working class" are to be found in the conspiracy of a "systematic blockage of the capacities found in culture and consciousness" (1978:8; and see Gray, 1977:87). Similarly, for Ginsburg, "the demands of the working class" which are reflected in social policy legislation "... have been processed and responded to in such a form that, far from posing a threat to capital, they have

11. Giddens, for example, notes that "... the stability of capitalist society depends upon the maintenance of an insulation of economy and polity, such that questions of industrial organization appear as 'non-political'" (1973:114). George and Wilding (1976:26) provide a quotation from Friedman's Capitalism and Freedom in which he glorifies the removal of economic decision-making from political authority as a means of checking the power of the latter by the former.

deepened its acceptance and extended its survival" (1979:19).

To conceive of 'capitalist' production as a 'structured totality' is inevitably to deny effectivity to political struggle. Class essentialism is no solution to this problem. If political struggle is to be conceived of in terms of its specific conditions of existence and its own effectivity it is also necessary to question the tendency to reduce political struggle to the struggle between individuals or groups of individuals. To adopt such a humanistic perspective is to plunge discourse into an irreconcilable dichotomy, characterised in the previous chapter by the notion of the "ontological gulf".

"Whether they are conceived as free or as the more or less unfree creatures of their social relations the conceptualisation of agents in terms of universal subjective attributes can provide no means of conceptualising the effectivity and conditions of existence of particular agents and the particular actions they undertake" (Cutler et al., 1977:273).

6. A Prospectus

Marx's critique of political economy has epistemological conditions described by Foucault through his conception of the Modern episteme. Man, as that "strange empirico-transcendental doublet", is the Alpha and Omega of Marx's discourse. History begins with Man the 'species-being' who enters into social relations of production. As he transforms the world through labour, Man transforms himself. Marx utilized this materialist conception of Man and historical progress to develop the Hegelian theme of the Absolute, transferring the motor-force of history from the universal character of consciousness to the

universal character of labour. Each stage of material development took a specific form, determining the characteristics of social relations, but each form was the phenomenal aspect of a universal law of societal evolution.

Bob Fine has expressed the view that Marxists have all too often concentrated upon the content of social institutions to the serious neglect of their forms (1979a:passim). Recent interest amongst Marxists in the works of Pashukanis reflects a new desire to understand the form taken by law, the state and so on. Pashukanis rejected the crude Marxist-Leninist portrayal of the law as the instrument of ruling class oppression and asked: "Why does the dominance of a class not continue to be that which it is ... the subordination of one part of the population to another part? Why does it take on the form of official state domination?" (1951:185). However, given Marx's own subordination of 'forms' to the universal laws which determine them, it is perhaps understandable that Marxists have concentrated upon the empirical features of these 'forms'. For, what does it matter why particular institutions are what they are if they are merely epiphenomenal? And, in fact, we see that Pashukanis must reduce the form of law to the status of a reflection of the commodity form which, in turn, reflects the labour theory of value. Law is an ideological mystification of real social relations. Similarly, Fine accepts "the imperatives of capital accumulation and the class struggle" (1979a:32) and he endorses Marx's view that, during the transition to socialist production, distribution will, for a while, still be based on the commodity form and must, therefore, be

supported by 'bourgeois' conceptions of 'right'. Fine, then, accepts the view that 'bourgeois' law is essentially bound to "the objective commodity relation" (ibid.:39). Despite an interest in the specificity of social forms, Fine, like Pashukanis, ignores the specific conditions of existence of these forms and turns, instead, to economism. Fine, like those from the German 'state-derivationist' camp (see Holloway and Picciotto, 1978; Hirst, 1979: 164 et seq.), argues that the derivation of the form of law from the commodity form, when applied not to simple commodity production but to capitalist relations, reveals its ideological character as a "surface appearance" (Blanke et al., see Hirst, ibid.) and as "illusory" (Fine). The specific form of law, then, "is a functional requirement of capitalism" (Blanke et al.): it is "crucial" but nevertheless "spurious" (Fine). As Hirst notes in his critique of Blanke et al., the process of legislation and legal definition becomes merely the form through which economic imperatives are realised (1979: 169-70).

Fine's paper on "Law and Class" is contained in a National Deviancy Conference, Conference of Socialist Economists joint publication (Fine et al., 1979) in which much is made about the reality of concepts such as 'right' and 'freedom' within 'bourgeois' law. Contributors struggle for a theoretically legitimate way to say that 'bourgeois' legality provides genuine legality and is yet a sham. Jock Young argues against "left idealism" that formal equality is not a sham but that it "obfuscates" (obscures?) and legitimates real inequalities. Progressive law, he argues, "... can make a real

impact on the world, although its aims are always undermined by the class society of which it is a part" (1979:23. Emphasis added.).

A "real impact", then, is an irrelevant impact in terms of the transformation of society. Fine looks particularly at this paradox (1979a:44). On the one hand, he notes, Marx called for the 'bourgeois' state to be 'smashed', whilst on the other he acknowledged its necessity in the transition to communism. This paradox, Fine notes, has usually been 'resolved' by ignoring one side or the other. Fine's resolution is extremely cryptic. 'Bourgeois' and 'socialist' law may both reflect the fetishism of commodity exchange, nevertheless, the change from the former to the latter is "a change in form and content". Such a formula can only mean a change from 'bourgeois' class relations to 'socialist' class relations: class relations, then, dictate the form of the law.

There can be no grand solutions to the political problems developed within Marxist discourse. As long as radicals accept unquestioningly the trans-historical laws of development of society developed by Marx their discourse will continue to revolve in reductionist circles. The search for a privileged discourse which will predict crises and the overthrow of 'capitalism' must be abandoned.

(i) Why Theorise?

"... if theories 'only exist as discourse' then what is the relevance of theory? i.e. why theorise?" (Burton and Carlen, 1979:125).

Burton and Carlen, influenced by the work of Hindess and Hirst and their co-workers, reached a point in their study of 'official discourse' when they felt they were in an intellectual cul-de-sac. After all, as they remind us Hindess and colleagues had "... (1) denied ... any privilege for their own theorising; (2) reaffirmed the existence of an extra-discursive realm of objects; (3) denied that any specified relationships between the discursive and the extra-discursive could be theorised; (4) denied that they are epistemological agnostics; and (5) denied that they are pragmatists" (1979:126). What, then, for Hindess et al is the relation between political theory and political practice? Hirst offers an answer: "A 'political theory' serves calculation in two ways: it provides criteria of appropriateness of political actions (objectives, principles, 'ideology') and it provides discursive means for characterising the situation of action" (1979:3). ⁽¹²⁾ Burton and Carlen, however, already have a further question, for "... if theoretical work proceeds ... by 'problematizing' and 'reconstruction' then how is such work done outside of an epistemology which, even if not guaranteeing a theory at least provides conditional criteria for the recognition (and usage) of reconstructed theories ...?" (1979:125). Theories, of course, are reconstructed according to logical demands for consistency between their concepts. The theories chosen for

12. As already briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, "... the conditions of calculation of effectivity and of the production of effect are not separable" (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:59). Theory does not provide solutions to problems. The relation is not as that between pure science and technological practice.

reconstruction, however, are chosen for political and ideological reasons. The "conditional criteria" are not determined by privileged methodological formulas but by the terms of socialist discourse which, of course, has a "definite political ideology and a definite political objective, namely, the ... socialist transformation of capitalist relations of production" (Cutler et al., 1977:315). Socialist theorising begins with "the already there-ness" of socialist concepts and is a continuous process because there is no privileged form of closure and because each political problem must be considered in terms of the specificity of its 'form' and the effectivity of its 'content'. "To deny theory the role of 'knowledge' ... is not to deny the crucial organising and directing role that political discourse can ... have ..." (Hirst, 1979:8-9).

Habermas has written that "The idea of truth can be unpacked only in relation to the discursive redemption of validity claims" and that "... truth belongs categorically to the world of thoughts ... and not to that of perceptions". (13) Given the premise that theory only exists as discourse, the question should not be - why theorise, but - why discuss. The answer to that question must be linked to notions about the value of open discussion free from bias and privilege of any kind, that is, to a notion of the ideal communication situation. The conditions of such a forum deny 'theory' any privileges which might

13. Quoted by McCarthy (1978:303, 307) from Habermas' Wahrheitstheorien (1973). In making reference here and in Chapter 1 to Habermas' notion of the 'ideal speech situation', Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics is not being endorsed. Such a theory produces an essentialisation of human characteristics dependent upon psychological and phylogenetic categories.

seek to set it apart from discourse in general. (14) The criterion of "cogency" rather than "the logical modality of necessity" (McCarthy, 1978:313) must not, however, "itself become a legislative criterion, a substitute for epistemology" (Hindess and Hirst, 1977:73). That criterion has its conditions of existence within ideological notions about the advantages of 'socialist' forms of social relations. Theory cannot claim appropriateness through an epistemological theory of adequacy without also claiming privilege: appropriateness can only be claimed through the discursive redemption of its own validity claims.

(ii) Capitalist Relations of Production : Some General Concepts. The political aim of socialism is the transformation of existing relations of production into socialist relations. To discuss relations of production is to discuss the forms of possession of the means and conditions of production. These means and conditions are "... all the conditions necessary to the operation of a particular labour process which are combined in the units of production in which that process takes place" (Cutler et al., 1977:251). In the event that any of these conditions are effectively in the possession and control of one category of economic agents such that others in the production process are separated from their possession and control, then this is the basis for a class relationship. Thus, within capitalist relations of production, capitals (individual capitalists; partnerships; joint-

14. In which case there is no substance to Habermas' distinction between theoretical and practical discourse beyond his essentialist notion of 'human interests'.

stock companies) possess commodities (property; raw materials; land) and workers have to sell their labour power to capitals in order to work these commodities. The control exercised by capitals also means that the distribution of the product is not within the control of those workers who have helped to produce it.

So far we have a determinate set of relations of production (e.g. 'capitalism'). To be determinate they must have certain conditions of existence, but as a concept, "relations of production" can only specify, within its own terms, its general conditions of existence; a concept cannot specify the form those conditions are likely to take and it cannot legislate for their inevitability (Cutler et al., 1977:209). For example, capitalist relations of production require formal modes of defining and sanctioning forms of property and their ownership and forms of contract to buy and sell. But the concept of capitalist relations of production does not designate specific forms of legality, their application or interpretation.

The term 'economic agent' has been used. Cutler and his colleagues characterise the concept of 'agent' as being contingent upon a conception of 'social relations' (1977:267). An 'agent' is defined as "... an entity capable of occupying the position of a locus of decision in a social relation ..." (ibid.). The concept of agent does not, however, specify the form an agent may take within a determinate social formation. Within the concept of a social formation with capitalist relations of production, the production and distribution of commodities requires agents recognised culturally or

legally as the owners of property; the parties to a contract, the possessors of certain skills of calculation and techniques of work. Without doubt, such agents would usually be identified with human individuals but the concept of capitalist relations of production does not demand this. For example, as Cutler et al suggest, the joint-stock company is, for legal purposes, an economic agent entitled to enter into contracts and is the locus of decisions (ibid.:276-7; and see Hirst, 1979:127 et seq.).

Given the stipulation that relations of production are economic class relations wherein certain agents are the possessors and others the non-possessors of the means of production, this does not imply that all agents within a social formation are economic agents. This is an important point, for if class relations are restricted to the possession of, or separation from, the means of production, the position of those agents whom Marxists have termed the 'petty bourgeoisie', and those increasing numbers of agents involved as functionaries of the state, is problematised. Agents employed by a capital for 'wages' are separated from the means and conditions of production and are, therefore, 'workers' whether they be directors, managers or labourers. This necessarily includes those employed in service industries (hotels; banks; shops) whenever their means and conditions of work are in the effective possession of a capital. To consider industrial capital to be the sine qua non of capitalist relations of production is an essentialist dogma. Other agents then, for example those employed by the state, form part of the division of social labour and are not economic agents. Such a notion, it must be

clear, has important implications for those conspiratorial approaches and for theories about the 'ideological state apparatuses' which seek to define state employees as agents or representatives of capital. Gough, for example, provides a detailed analysis of the economic relevance of welfare investment within a capitalist economy. Gough's "primary question" is: has the "extensive growth of state expenditure on the social services ... benefited or harmed the capitalist sector ...?" (1979:102). To answer this question, Gough turns to the Marxist essentialisation of labour power and the law of capitalist accumulation.

Gough begins with a paradox which reflects 'capitalisms' inherent location within contradictions: welfare expenditure is "necessary to sustain the accumulation and reproduction of capital" and yet it diverts capital from investment to pay for welfare services (1979:105). Gough then suggests a refinement to this interpretation. First, he defines state employees as performing surplus labour - "they will work for a greater amount of time than the labour time embodied" in their wages (ibid.:119). This 'surplus' may then be appropriated by capital through the treatment of welfare services as an augmentation of wages and the effective reduction of wages at the next round of pay bargaining. Secondly, Gough defines social services as either "reproductive" or "non-reproductive", depending upon whether they contribute to the reproduction of labour. One aspect of "the contemporary economic crisis", which is "brought about by the very nature of capitalist growth and development" (ibid.:127), is the conflict over who pays for the welfare services - labour or capital.

This conflict is conducted by the "labour movement" on behalf of "the working class, broadly conceived", that is, including those in the state sector. Having incorporated state employees as members of the 'working class' they can then be finally determined according to the dictates of the law of capitalist accumulation. For Marxists like Gough, agents can only be given theoretical significance to the degree that they be located either with labour or capital but, in that very act, their effectivity is immediately undermined by determining factors at the level of the economy.

In a similar fashion, Corrigan and Leonard, adopt intellectual contortions to answer the question: what is "the structural position of state employees"? (1978:104). In effect they are asking: how does the economic structure determine the role of state employees? Welfare workers are not, they insist, "simply henchmen of the ruling class" because to say so would offend the doctrine of the "semi-autonomous nature of the State". Nevertheless, they are not "neutral", as such a claim would endorse "an essential feature of bourgeois ideologies" (ibid.). "Historically, the link between State employees and the ruling class can be identified in terms of common social origins ..." (ibid.:105. Miliband is cited as the authority for this statement.). "This, however, is not the whole story..." The rest of the story carries the now familiar ambivalence. "State employees perform a central social function in relation to the ruling class ..." because of their location within the 'ideological state apparatuses'. But this ought not to be seen in "too functionalist a manner" because state employees are "... especially exposed to counter-ideological

influences both from the working class ... and from intellectual struggles within State organisations ..." (ibid.:105-6). Welfare workers, then, are "spokesmen and representatives of the bourgeois class" because of their objective location within the state but, by being a "... part of a labour movement which exposes them to the power of the material reality and ideology of the working class", welfare workers can attain a subjective location with the 'working class' (ibid.:83-4).

Class essentialism dictates that everyone has a class position, either objectively through origins or the nature of employment ('proletarianisation') or subjectively through conscious choice or experience:

"The expansion of social work ... has absorbed a stratum of the middle class who, themselves, have been displaced from direct production into the service sector and who not only look and dress like their clients, but have a significant overlap of real interests and experiences" (Matthews, 1979:115).

The political relevance of groups of workers such as welfare employees cannot be determined according to the strength of 'working class' essence they can claim for themselves. The economic classes of labour and capital are determined by socialist discourse on the relations of production. Radicals must begin to turn their attention to the production of concepts appropriate to other agents within the division of social labour and their political relevance to the struggle to democratise and socialise social relations outside of the 'capitalist' sector. Socialist practice is not any the less 'socialist' simply

because it cannot show how its actions will overthrow 'capitalism'. 'Sloganeering' claims that 'capitalism' will only be overcome "through the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat" (Young, 1979:28; and see Pritchard and Taylor, 1978:67) or that it is 'capitalism's' "internal contradiction" that will lead to its transformation (Kinsey, 1979:64) must be rejected as of little benefit to the radical cause, particularly in the attempt to gain political support both from welfare workers and their clients.

7. Summarising Discussion *good practice*

This chapter has continued the critique of essentialisms begun in the previous chapter and has extended that analysis into some of the basic concepts of Marxist theoretical discourse. It has been argued and illustrated that such a critique is demanded because of the growing application of such basic concepts in the radical problematising of welfare discourse. In their attempts to radicalise the welfare realm, theorists such as Corrigan and Leonard, Gough, and Ginsburg have sought to identify the political issues of that discourse through the restatement of a body of Marxist theory which is essentialist and scientistic. Unfortunately, it is this kind of loyalty to the formulae of Marxism which elicits the response from many welfare practitioners - 'It's All Right for You to Talk' (Cohen, 1975).

Given the political aim of transforming 'capitalist relations' into 'socialist relations', Marxist discourse has all too often sought to identify the essential nature of 'capitalism'. Seen as a structured totality in a state of homeostasis, the 'capitalist mode of

production' is portrayed as governed by 'laws of nature' which propel it through time. The dialectical force of the 'inherent contradictions' of 'capitalist relations' both guarantee their reproduction and eventual metamorphosis. Universal laws of social evolution are manifested in the specificity of their form within determinate 'modes of production'. One such law is the requirement for Men to organise their labour to ensure their reproduction. Marxist discourse gives pride of place to the labour process and endorses it through the 'theory of value'. The value of a product is measured by the labour invested in its production. It is on the basis of this essentialisation of the notions of labour and value that Marxist discourse reasons that labour power is expropriated from direct producers by 'capitalists' who monopolise the means of production. The total value of a commodity is attributable to labour time invested in its production, and the difference between the cost of reproducing that labour power (wages) and the value in exchange of the commodity represents the profit which the 'capitalist' expropriates.

To increase profits 'capitalists' must exploit greater proportions of surplus labour by extending working hours and by the more efficient use of that labour. This process leads to accumulation of capital in the form of bigger and more efficient enterprises and the supersession of labour power by machinery. This process, according to Marxist discourse, results in a surplus population of labour which is required both as casual labour and as a reserve pool which effectively keeps down wages through competition for jobs. It is on the basis of the essentialisation of labour and the inevitability of the accumulation of

capital that most other Marxist concepts are erected. This can be seen in the obligatory recounting of the labour theory of value, the inherently contradictory nature of capitalist development and capital accumulation, in radical texts whose substantive topic is welfare discourse. Such essentialism and scientism allows radical theorists to propose an inevitable struggle between the ruling class of 'capitalists' and the exploited 'working class', a struggle which will, ultimately, only be resolved by the logic of 'capitalist' development which ends in crisis and the transformation to 'socialism'.

Compelled by loyalty to the liturgy of Marxist concepts, radicals in the welfare realm struggle to resolve a desire to acknowledge the reality and relevance of class struggle and a Marxist pessimism which portrays 'capitalist society' as hegemonised by 'bourgeois' ideology. The result is recourse to a series of notions about the 'relative autonomy' of the state, the law, the class struggle and so on, which cannot be compatible with notions about 'laws of capitalist development' and determination by the economy 'in the last instance'.

Loyalty to the basic essentialist concepts of Marxist discourse leads to an incoherence and tension between conceptions of class subjects cast in experiential and existentialist terms and conceptions of the 'laws' which dictate the form and content of the 'capitalist mode of production'. The controversy over how 'capitalism' is to be overthrown and whether this will occur through revolution or through gradual reform, is simply a reflection of the tensions built into Marxist discourse. This has a particular relevance in the welfare realm which, for many Marxists, symbolises the failure of the class struggle and the

'incorporation' of the working class.

"If the social formation is not conceived as governed by the essential structure of a mode of production and its corresponding forms of State, politics, and ideology then the options facing socialist politics can no longer be reduced to a matter of confronting this essential structure [revolution] or else refusing to do so [reform]" (Cutler et al., 1977:317).

In the remaining chapters of this thesis, a reworking of discourse on welfare will be offered which utilizes the critiques of epistemology and essentialism developed in this and earlier chapters. Welfare discourses will be analysed in terms of what has been called, in this thesis, the epistemological conditions of existence of those discourses. It is argued that a deconstruction of welfare discourses has a particular value in the current situation, illustrating as it shall the continuity which radical discourse maintains with modes of analysis it purports to supersede. Using the concept of the 'policing of idleness', it will be argued that within determinate relations of production the definition of a national labour force and its supervision, and the definition and supervision of those agents not forming part of the labour force, have specific conditions of existence but that the form and content of these conditions cannot simply be read as determined by the relations of production in question.

Orthodoxy turned upon orthodoxy - with good effects!

CHAPTER 4

The Regulation of Labour and the Policing
of Idleness

1. Introduction

As has already been indicated, the point of emphasis in this thesis is not historical 'facts' but a series of specific concepts, that is, welfare discourse and the policing of idleness within the framework of a determinate social formation. That social formation is the concept of the British national economy. This mode of specification rejects the treatment of the British Welfare State as a 'capitalist' economy ultimately determined in its forms, if not its details, by generalizing features peculiar to all 'capitalist' economies. ⁽¹⁾ To specify in discourse a determinate social formation is to specify relations of production, economic class relations and their political, cultural, legal and ideological conditions of existence. ⁽²⁾ The British national economy is conceived of in terms of capitalist relations of production in which the means and conditions of production are effectively possessed by one class of economic agents thereby separating other economic agents from these essential prerequisites of production. Economic agents, whether possessors or non-possessors, require specific modes of recognition of their status either through custom or law, that is, they require what Hirst calls "an instance of regulation" (1980:62). The "instance of regulation" must be publicly acknowledge to carry the authority to regulate and adjudicate over definitions concerning the role and status of agents. The "instance of regulation" will be conceived of as the state but, as

Hirst emphasises, this does not imply a single agency of domination, for the state may well be a complex of agencies (ibid.:66). A condition of existence of capitalist relations of production, for example, is a 'sovereign' state which must create, legitimate and regulate a complex network of public laws defining, inter alia, commercial relations between fractions of capital and labour.

The Marxist conception of the social formation as a structured totality with a dominant mode of production determines the form and guarantees the effectivity of the conditions of existence of the social formation. As such it becomes, in Althusser's words, an "eternity in Spinoza's sense"; it guarantees its own reproduction. This conceptualisation, deriving its authority from Marx, ⁽¹⁾ was utilized by Althusser in his analysis of the 'ideological state apparatuses' and their function in the reproduction of the relations of production and it has been followed by numerous other Marxist theorists. Transition from one mode of production to another was conceived by Marx as the result of the non-correspondence between the forces and relations of production and the class struggle which finally overthrows the outmoded structure. Marxist theorisations of the transformation of capitalist relations tend, consequently, to resolve themselves into functionalist interpretations with associated dysfunctions ('crises'), or into conspiratorial approaches which demand the kindling of a 'revolutionary consciousness' of their

1. "Capitalist production ... under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation ..." (Capital, Vol.I, 1977:542)

exploited status by 'the proletariat'. Rejection of such interpretations as essentialist and scientistic requires acceptance that there can be no general theory of transition. (2)

As Cutler et al point out, Marx's own discourse on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, (3) does not remain true to the theoretical protocol of transition established in Capital (Cutler et al., 1977:143 et seq.).

Transition can only be conceived of in terms of specific transformations of definite political, cultural and ideological conditions and their associated social relations. But this is a matter of political practice and calculation. Socialists must specify and problematise areas for political struggle within the limits of a determinate social formation. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis under a discussion of radical discourse in the welfare realm. For the moment it is important to note the limitations within which a radical analysis of the period of transition of the British national economy from feudal to capitalist relations must work. Hindess and Hirst, in a work

2. See in this context Hindess' and Hirst's discussion of the problem of theorising transition (1975:Chapter 6). As the authors note, what Marx describes as the classical form of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, found in the history of England, is rather a polemic against bourgeois accounts of the process of primitive accumulation (1975:288; and see Cutler et al., 1977:144).

3. See in Capital, Vol.I the chapters on "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation"; "Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land"; "Bloody Legislation Against the Expropriated"; "Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer"; "Reaction of the Agricultural Revolution on Industry"; "Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist" (1977:667-712).

more heavily indebted to Althusser than their later texts, saw the analysis of transition from 'feudalism' to 'capitalism' as decidedly 'non-scientific'. Such an analysis, they suggested, had a merely critical and polemical value, being "... nothing but more or less sophisticated ideology" (1975:287). The analysis presented in this thesis does not, however, attempt to find or apply a universal theory of such transition, rather it utilizes a series of concepts in terms of their contribution to an understanding of the conditions of existence of the British national economy under feudal and capitalist relations of production and the transition from one to the other. This is polemical in the sense that liberal and radical histories of welfare are deconstructed and shown to have disregarded the specificity of the discourses they portray in terms of the evolution or development of the Welfare State.

2. Episteme and Social Formation

A constant theme, running through the works of Foucault, is the identification of fundamental discursive discontinuities. In Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the Clinic, The Order of Things and, to a less obvious degree, in Discipline and Punish, Foucault identifies specific discursive discontinuities where others have sought to form continuities. It is a mode of analysis which allows Foucault to talk of "the birth" of the clinic and of the prison, but also of the rupture between the Classical analysis of wealth and modern economic theory. Although Foucault's own discourse does offend his protocol from time to time, it was not Foucault's intention in using the concept of the

episteme to allow it to hegemonise discourse. It is important to see each of Foucault's studies as separate archaeologies of specific discursive regularities. In general, Foucault's studies all suggest decisive fractures occurring within specific discursive formations at some point between the mid 18th and mid 19th centuries; these he characterises as contrasts between the Classical and the Modern episteme. Foucault's concept of the episteme will be adopted within this thesis to designate what are to be called the epistemological conditions of existence of specific discursive regularities.

The Archaeology of Knowledge is Foucault's most theoretical work on the theme of discourse analysis in which what he attempts to provide is not so much a theory of discourse formation as a "description of discursive events" (1972:27). Foucault's method is to begin with the accepted unities which traditionally are supposed to construct a specific body of discourse (psychopathology; medicine; social work) and then to systematically deconstruct them so that they appear in their "non-synthetic purity". It is the specificity and effectivity of determinate discourses which will be emphasised in this thesis. In attempting to specify certain of the legal and epistemological conditions of existence of discourse on welfare and the policing of idleness, this does not imply the search for an identifiable and eternal object of discourse, an essence bearing a message down the long corridor of history.

(i) The Regulation of the Labour Force. Whether conceptualizing a social formation as characterised by feudal or by capitalist relations

of production, such relations have, as a condition of their existence, specific cultural and legal modes of recognition. Feudal relations of production entail the effective possession of land by one class of economic agents and the effective separation from its possession of another class, the peasantry. Many histories of the Welfare State see the Poor Laws, and the repressive measures against vagabondage which are their necessary reverse side, as the common thread pulling together the centuries of history. It will be argued in this chapter that there are specific and identifiable discontinuities in the modalities of labour regulation and the control of idleness and that these disunities identify a break in the discursive conditions of formation of these modalities.

Foucault's Discipline and Punish has had a considerable impact upon radical theorists ⁽⁴⁾ who have seen in its concept of 'discipline' the insidious unity of care and control: it is through 'discipline', and its incorporation in the state apparatuses, that 'capitalist' class hegemony is guaranteed. For Hirst, the one critical lesson to be learned from Discipline and Punish is the specificity of forms of 'government' (1980:92); a message which is ultimately negated by Foucault in his homogenisation of power as a single oppressive 'discipline'. At the theoretical level, Discipline and Punish remains true to Foucault's earlier emphasis upon discontinuity and upon the specificity and effectivity of particular discursive events. For

4. See, for example, the papers in Fine et al (1979) by Lea and by Melossi; and "The birth of the welfare sanction" by David Garland (1981). As Bob Fine puts it: "The writings of Michel Foucault are gaining increasing currency within the left" (1979b:75); and see Hirst (1979:3).

example, Foucault emphasises the "multiform" nature of power and the fact that struggles for change must be conducted on a number of fronts rather than being directed simplistically towards the monolithic notion of 'the state' (1977:26-7). In his notion of 'discipline', however, Foucault's target is not, Fine notes in his critique of Foucault, a determinate form of social organisation but, rather, rational organisation per se (Fine, 1979b:88). Whilst concepts derived from Discipline and Punish will be adopted in what follows, the hegemonisation by 'discipline' of the conditions of existence of the social relations in question will be avoided.

Feudal relations of production within a determinate social formation have specific political, legal, cultural and ideological conditions of existence. For instance, the English peasant as economic agent was not so defined solely in terms of his political subordination to the power and will of the feudal landlord. Feudal relations of production entail a degree of autonomy for the peasant to put his limited means of production to good use to supply his own needs as well as to produce a surplus for his landlord. As Nicholls notes: "Our Saxon ancestors required every peasant who had not a domicile of his own, to reside with some householder, without whose surety he would not be regarded as a member of the community, nor be entitled to its protection" (1898:13). As Nicholls perceptively observes, such laws "... were no doubt chiefly intended as measures of police ... But they had likewise the effect of establishing reciprocal relations between the landless-man and the landowner ..." (ibid.:14). Marx records that by the end of the 14th century serfdom

had virtually disappeared in England (1977:671). A free peasantry does not, however, effectively alter the economic relationship between lord and peasant. Feudal relations of production require the effective ownership of the principal means of production, land, by one economic class and the effective subordination of the productive class and such a relationship does not demand a political dominance equivalent to slavery. Specific legal regulation of the free peasantry may well be a condition of existence of feudal relations. In the English context, we find laws to prevent robbery and murder on the highways between market towns (5) and the "Statute of Labourers" (1349) which specifically sought to control the labour supply by outlawing the giving of alms or pity to "valiant beggars". (6) This latter statute was passed following the ravages of the plague in 1348 and in reaction to the dramatic reduction in the labour supply which resulted in pressure upon landowners to pay higher wages. (7) The statute defined a specific economic class of labourers (those not "living in merchandise", "exercising any craft" or having "of his own whereof he may live, nor proper land") and sought

5. The "Statute of Winchester" (1285); the "Statute of Northampton" (1328) (Nicholls, 1898:22-36).

6. The Statute of Labourers thus forbade the giving of assistance to those "giving themselves to idleness and vice" who might otherwise earn their living through labour, "so that thereby they may be compelled to labour for their necessary living" (Quoted by Nicholls, 1898:36).

7. As the preamble to the Act records: "Because a great part of the people ... late died of the pestilence, many, seeing the necessity of masters and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages, and some rather willing to beg in idleness than by labour to get their living ..." (Quoted by Nicholls, 1898:37).

to bind them "to serve him which him shall require". In addition, it sought to control contractual agreements between the labourer and employer by making it an offence to leave employment "without reasonable cause or licence before the time agreed" (Nicholls, 1898: 37-8), and by controlling wages offered and prices demanded for articles and food. This legislation cannot be interpreted as the formal sanction for a reality of political domination. Less than two years later, further legislation appeared attempting to specifically determine the wage rates of mowers of meadows; reapers of corn; threshers; carpenters; masons; and others (Nicholls, 1898: 39-41).

Numerous Acts thereafter sought to define, control and direct the English peasantry. It is such legislation which reflects, for Corrigan and Corrigan "... the problem of a labour force that has to be mobile but which must not be allowed to wander out of the labour market altogether" (1979:3). Nothing within the concept of feudal relations of production, however, necessitates a highly mobile labour force: this reflects the Corrigans' belief that within feudalism the seeds of the 'capitalist' market are being sown (ibid.). Nothing within the concept suggests that vast numbers of peasants could exclude themselves from the labour market: this reflects the Corrigans' belief that labourers are essentially rebellious. The legislation in question sought: to define and to regulate the labour force; to control necessary labour mobility; (8) and to inhibit idleness. As Cutler

8. For example: an Act of 1350-1 (25 Edward III, Statute 2(e)) specifically allowed for seasonal migration south for the harvest. [All further references to specific statutes are taken from the Chronological Table of the Statutes published each year by HMSO.]

et al note, the definition and control of a labour force always implies "as a counterpart of the regulation of labour the regulation of idleness and poverty" (1978:250).

(ii) "An Act, so disgraceful ...". The relation between landlords and tenants/labourers within feudal relations of production cannot be seen simply as dominator/dominated. The antagonistic nature of the relationship plays itself out as class struggle. Landlords, in a position to influence the state, can obtain state support through legislation to control the conditions of labour. Class antagonism has, of course, other conditions of existence, for example, modalities of definition and control of vagrancy depend upon determinate beliefs and forms of knowledge.

In describing an Act of 1547, passed "for the punishment of vagabonds and for the relief of the poor and impotent persons", (9) as "An Act, ... disgraceful to the Legislature", Sir Frederic Eden marked, in 1797, the limits of an age of what Foucault has described as the "art of unbearable sensations" (1977:11). The Act in question condemns those responsible for failing to put earlier legislation against vagabonds into effect. (10) Defining "idle vagabonds" as those "loitering", idly wandering and refusing to work or running away having

9. I Edward VI, Cap.3, preamble (see Nicholls, 1898:129).

10. "... idleness and vagabondage is the mother and root of all thefts, robberies and other evil acts and mischiefs, which the king and parliament hath often with great travail endeavoured to repress; but owing to the foolish pity of them which should have seen the laws executed, the said goodlie statutes have hitherto had small effect ..."
(Preamble quoted by Nicholls, 1898:129-30; and see Eden, 1928:10).

agreed to work, the Act also defines those legitimately to be exempted from employment, that is, the "lame, impotent or so aged or diseased with sickness" as to be unable to work. Those convicted as vagabonds were to be branded with the letter 'V' and were to serve as slaves for two years for anyone demanding their services. Runaway 'slaves', when apprehended, were to be branded with 'S' and adjudged a slave for life. Convicted vagabonds not required as 'slaves' were to be returned to their birthplace and held in chains to labour on the highways. Failure to put the vagabond to such work attracted a heavy fine against the city, borough or town authorities (Nicholls, 1898:130-1). Such mutilation was not, of course, new to legislation (11) and it did not end when the Act of 1547 was repealed soon after in 1549. (12)

Power, Foucault argues, implies a correlative field of knowledge (1977:26-8). The exercise of power implies certain epistemological conditions. The epistemological conditions which Foucault describes as the episteme of the Middle Ages defined the art of generalisation as the art of identifying similitudes (1970:17 et seq.). It was resemblance which linked sign and signified. Within the limitations of the concept of feudal relations of production, the struggle of the landowning class

11. An Act of 1360 (34 Edward III, cap.10) for "The Punishment of Labourers ... departing from their service into another County" had ordered that such culprits were to be imprisoned and, if the employer so desired, branded on the forehead with the letter 'F' "in Token of Falsity".

12. In repealing the Act, 3 and 4 Edward VI, cap.16 notes "that the good and wholesome laws of the realm had not been put in execution because of the extremity of some of them" (Quoted by Nicholls, 1898:132).

to subsume the direct producers (peasants; tenants; labourers) had specific conditions of existence which gave legitimation to the traditional nature of that relationship. The Church, for example, was a large and powerful economic agent holding vast amounts of land in England until Henry VIII's dissolution of the religious houses in the mid 16th century. But the Church was also a powerful force legitimating the status quo. Made by God, the world contained mysteries towards whose solution God had left signs. As Foucault puts it: "The world is covered with signs that must be deciphered ... To know must ... be to interpret: to find a way from the visible mark to that which is being said by it and which, without that mark, would lie like unspoken speech ..." (1970:32). (13)

The forcible wearing of a sign, signifying a status not immediately visible, is common in mediaeval history. Legislation which sought to distinguish between the idle vagabond and the legitimately idle often applied a mark either to the body or the clothing. Such a mark signified the status of the body in question whilst symbolising the power of the agent who applied it. (14)

Legislation and its supervision, then, might be said to work through specific and limited

13. The semiology of the 16th century witch finder was the art of identifying body markings as the sign left by the devil. (See Szasz's The Manufacture of Madness, Paladin, 1973, especially Chapter 2: "The Malefactor Identified").

14. In 1215 the Pope decreed that Jews were to wear a yellow badge to identify themselves (Szasz, 1973:34). Legislation to protect consumers from inferior woollen caps being sold as "Leemynster wool" or "Coteswold wool" provided for caps made from these wools to be marked with the letters 'L' or 'C' (3 Henry VIII, cap.15;1511).

"power-knowledge relations" (Foucault, 1977:27), that is, it has determinate political, ideological and epistemological conditions of existence. In terms of the specificity and effectivity of these epistemological conditions, Foucault argues that knowledge in the Middle Ages was "absolutely poverty-stricken" (1970:30). It was a form of knowledge which registered the space of history not as a process, or an accumulation, but as an endless repetition of similitudes: "... sixteenth century knowledge condemned itself to never knowing anything but the same thing ..." (ibid.). It is within such an epistemological framework that the ideological endorsement of traditional social relations may be understood.

If the statuses of the vagabond and the unfaithful servant were to be branded on the body, various statutes sought to signify the relative statuses of other orders of men by legislating for the nature of the clothing to be worn by grooms and servants of lords; handicraftsmen and yeomen; esquires and gentlemen; merchants and citizens; knights and clergy; carters, ploughmen, oxherds, cowherds, shepherds and "... all other people that have not forty shillings of goods and chattels" (quoted by Nicholls, 1898:43, from an Act of 1363).⁽¹⁵⁾

"The only possible form of link between the elements of this knowledge is addition. Hence those immense columns of compilation, hence their monotony" (Foucault, 1970:30).

15. Commenting on a later Act of 1463 (4 Edward IV), Nicholls records his surprise that such matters should have occupied the legislature at such a time, "... the nation being then hardly freed from the turmoil of rebellion ..." (1898:84). The Act sought to regulate spending on clothing but it also sought a means of identification for a heterogeneous and volatile population. Further 'ordinances of clothing' appeared in 1462 and 1509.

Feudal relations of production do not require a peasant class tied in feudal slavery to the soil. What is required by the concept is the subsumption of the direct producers through the effective control of the land by another economic class. Marx describes one way in which the English landowners consolidated this subsumption through force rather than, for example, through their influence with the state. By driving the peasantry from the land by force and by expropriating common land, the great land lords were able to establish large sheep farms. As Marx notes, state action was often, in fact, directed towards reversing this process (1977:673). (16)

Whilst this process might well have prepared the English economy for the development of capitalist social relations, it is simply teleological and necessarily unhelpful to argue, as Marx does, that "What the capitalist system demanded was ... a degraded and almost servile condition of the mass of the people ..." (1977:674). It is a reification which does, however, readily inform the discourse of Marxist historians of social policy. (17) There is, working within the empirical process described by Marx in Capital, Vol.I, a

16. 4 Henry VII, cap.19 (1489) reads: "The king, having singular pleasure above all things to avoid such enormities and mischiefs as be hurtful ... to the common weal, remembereth that great inconveniences daily doth increase by desolation and pulling down and wilful waste of houses and towns, and laying to pasture lands which customably have been used for tilth ..." (Nicholls, 1898:95).

17. Corrigan and Sayer (1981:22) write: "The conditions in which the 'natural laws' of political economy could operate had to be forcibly constructed". Hindess and Hirst in Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production outline one possible variant form of the feudal mode within whose concepts it is possible to theorise conditions suitable for transformation into capitalist relations (1975:256-8).

combination of class struggles: between peasantry and lord, between lords and the state, between lords and merchant capital within the expanding cities and towns. Separation of the peasantry from all means of production, including common-land, results in an economic agent suitable for employment by merchant farmers renting land from landowners (Marx, 1977:678) or by merchant capital. Within the space created by this combination of class struggle a problem of control is formed, the problem of a mobile labour force, whether driven from the land or attracted to expanding towns and cities by the rumour of employment.

If vagabondage was to be distinguished both from legitimate mobility and from warrantable idleness, then conditions of recognition had to be established and methods for their utilization and enforcement instituted. Within the limiting epistemological conditions of a knowledge form bound to tradition, the vagabond could be identified by the outward signs of his status: the peculiarity of his speech and of his clothing, for example. (18) Vagabonds, of course, might well have disabilities or be of such an age as to be unable to work; certainly many would feign such impotence. Legislation attempted to confine

18. Thomas Harman, in his A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursetors Vulgarly Called Vagabonds (1566), provided the 16th century with a detailed and precise description of 23 orders of vagrants: the ruffler; the upright man; a hooker or angler; a prigger of prancer; palliards; and so on. His book also provides descriptions of: clothing - "commonly go in frieze jerkins"; "commonly in jerkins of leather"; "these go with patched cloaks"; the deceipts practised - "These Abraham men be those that feign themselves to have been mad"; and their argot - 'Pedlar's French' (Harman, 1871).

impotent beggars to their present domiciles or to the place of their birth (19) and an Act of 1530 (20) ordered justices to register the "names in a bill or roll indented" of those who, through age or impotence, were to be allowed to beg (Nicholls, 1898:115). The power of the word, then, was paramount. By the Act of 1388, servants and labourers were allowed to leave their home areas (hundred; rape etc.) only if in possession of 'a letter-patent' under the king's seal (ibid.:56); the Act of 1530 provided legitimate beggars with a letter of authorisation to beg. (21) Those not so registered, or those registered found begging outside the prescribed area were to feel the power of the mark of the sovereign not as a sign on paper but as a stigmata on their bodies. (22) Hence, the episteme of the Middle Ages acted through the accumulation of similitudes and the compilation of names and markings.

It is just such a basic epistemological framework which informed the threefold classification of Juan Luis Vives, adviser on poor law matters to the municipale authorities of Bruges, and acquaintance of

19. For example: 12 Richard II, caps.3-9 (1388); 11 Henry VII, cap.2 (1495).

20. 22 Henry VII, cap.12.

21. By the Act 2 and 3 Philip and Mary, cap.5 (1555) parishes which could not relieve their poor were to provide them with "a licence to go abroad to beg". Such beggars were to wear openly on the breast and back of their garments, some notable badge or token (Nicholls, 1898: 141-2).

22. 27 Henry VIII, cap.25 (1535) consolidated this power of the mark. Those already whipped under direction of the 1530 Act who returned to a district to beg were to have the "upper part of the gristle of the right ear clean cut off, so that it may appear as a perpetual token ...".

Henry VIII. In 1526, Vives published a report ("De subventionem pauperum sive de humanis necessitatibus") in which he divided destitute persons into: those sheltering in hospitals and almshouses; homeless beggars; and honest and shamefaced poor abiding in their own houses (Webb and Webb, 1927:37). A quarter of a century later, in 1553, a scheme for dealing with all classes of the poor in London was devised. Utilizing the ternary classification used by Vives and implicit in much earlier legislation for the punishment of vagabonds and valiant beggars and for the relief of the impotent, sick and aged poor, each class was, in turn, subdivided into three further categories: (23) monotonous compilation indeed. In 1555, the king's palace at Bridewell was granted to the Corporation of the city of London to house idle and lewd people; the poor, sick and weak; and the poor wayfarer (Webb and Webb, 1927:50). Running parallel with the "art of unbearable sensations" we see "an economy of suspended rights" (Foucault, 1977:11). Whilst the mark, as the significant, remained for several years to designate the signified through the conjuncture of

23. The poor by impotency were subdivided into: the fatherless poor man's child; the aged, blind and lame; the diseased by leprosy, dropsy etc. The poor by casualty were divided into: the wounded soldier; the decayed householder; the visited by grievous disease. Finally, the thriftless poor were broken down into: the rioter that consumeth all; the vagabond that will abide in no place; the idle person, as the strumpet. (Quoted by the Webbs, 1927:49, from a work by Holinshed published in 1577. The classification was found worthy of repetition in 1615 and 1638 and was cited again in the Ninth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners in 1843.)

resemblance ("V" for vagabondage, "P" for pauperism), (24)
 legislation entered upon what Foucault calls, elsewhere, 'the great confinement' (1967). In 1572, legislation ordered justices of the peace to register the poor and to provide "convenient places to settle the same poor people for their habitation and abidings" (quoted by Nicholls, 1898:159-60). The poor who were able to, were to be set to work. This Act introduced the function of the overseer of the poor and assessment and collection of poor rates. It also began that "economy of suspended rights". Poor persons, sufficiently able to be given work, who refused such employment in "their said abiding-place" were to be treated as vagabonds and appropriately punished.

That there was major concern over the number of unemployable, unemployed and deliberately idle people living by begging cannot be doubted. The 1572 Act included amongst "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars", those using subtle craft and unlawful games; those able in body but without land or master who were not able to give a satisfactory account of how they earned a living; and those who refused to work for wages commonly given. (25) There had, in addition, been statutory discrimination against gipsies ('Egyptians')

24. By the Act I James I, cap.7 (1603), dangerous rogues were to be branded on the left shoulder with a Roman "R" that it "may be seen and remain for a perpetual mark upon such rogue during his or her life" (Quoted by Nicholls, 1898:211).

25. 14 Elizabeth I, cap.5; see Nicholls (1898:159). According to Eden (1928:16-7) the 1572 Act actually outlined nine categories of rogues, vagabonds and beggars. As Foucault says, the epistemological conditions of knowledge in the Middle Ages advanced by an accumulation of similitudes.

since 1530. (26) That such legislation represented but one aspect of the conditions of existence of one economic class must not, however, be overlooked. In 1548, legislation sought to outlaw trading agreements amongst "sellers of victuals" who, "not contented with moderate and reasonable gain, have conspired and covenanted together to sell their victuals at unreasonable prices". The same Act also outlawed combinations amongst artificers, handicraftsmen and labourers who sought thereby to regulate the division of labour between their various trades and the length of their working day. (27) Three years later, legislation sought both to maintain and increase the amount of land put to tillage and to prohibit the use of "gigg-mills" in the production of cloth. Legislation, then, reflected the influence of a variety of economic and class pressures which cannot simplistically be described in terms of the inexorable march of advancing capitalism. Every determinate social formation, seen in terms of specific relations of production and their legal, political, ideological etc. conditions of existence, requires cultural or legal regulation and determination of the status, role and scope of economic agents. Thus we find 5 Elizabeth I, cap.4 (1562) seeking to consolidate earlier legislation by: defining those who had to work

26. 22 Henry VIII, cap.10: "An Act concerning Egyptians".

27. 2 and 3 Edward VI, cap.15. Nicholls (1898:135), writing in the 1850s, notes that "a free and open market" was all that was required to adjust prices, whereas the combination of artisans "was an unwarrantable interference with the freedom to which every man is entitled". Whereas combination amongst those selling goods would, then, simply be overridden by the logic of the market (unreasonably high prices encouraging further competition), combination amongst the labour force 'required' formal control.

Gooy | (unmarried persons; married persons under 30 with a trade not having 40 shillings per annum; and everyone between 12 and 60, who was to be compelled to serve in husbandry); limiting movement in search of work to those carrying a testimonial signed by a constable; outlawing the employment of those without such a testimonial; and by defining the number of hours to be worked, meal times and wages. The 'interventionist state' is certainly not limited to 'welfare-capitalism' or to aberrant forms of state socialism.

"Law is an instance of regulation: an institutionally specific complex of organizations and agents, discourses and practices, which operates to define (whether in codified rules or not) the form and limits of other organizations, agents and practices" (Hirst, 1980:62).

Gooy | Laws have their own conditions of existence and this chapter has demonstrated some of the economic, ideological and epistemological conditions of English legislation regulating the labour force within feudal relations of production. The effectivity of such legislation is not, of course, computed in advance by any logic of economic or class forces. Effectivity depends upon specific calculations of the impact of legislation, the agencies created to enforce legislation and the play of political and social forces. 18 Elizabeth I, cap.3 (1575), for example, legislated "needful Addition to the Statute concerning the Punishment of Vagabonds and Relief of the Poor" (the Act of 1572). Justices were specifically authorised to obtain stocks (wool; hemp; iron etc.) to be worked by the poor and 'houses of correction' were to be set aside for those refusing such work. This necessitated the creation of agents to supervise such houses and powers to define their

duties (powers given to the justices, in this case). Finally, a regular source of financing 'houses' and 'stocks' had to be legislated for (collectors of taxes, for example).

Discourses on labour, idleness and welfare within feudal relations of production appear as partial conditions of existence of those relations. Such discourses have determinate ideological and cultural conditions which have been termed, in this chapter, epistemological conditions and have been identified in their general form with Foucault's episteme of the Middle Ages. Such epistemological conditions are not, however, determined in their form by the relations of production and their influence on the content of discourses (legislation, for example) and their effectivity is not guaranteed in advance.

From the beginning of the 17th century, Foucault suggests, "... thought ceases to move in the element of resemblance. Similitude is no longer the form of knowledge but rather the occasion of error, the danger to which one exposes oneself when one does not examine the obscure region of confusions" (1970:51). In contrast to a mode of discourse which accumulated similitudes, reacting through legislation to existing signs and through "an art of unbearable sensations", the discourse of the Classical episteme begins to order the world.

"From now on, every resemblance must be subjected to proof by comparison ... The activity of the mind ... will therefore no longer consist in drawing things together, in setting out on a quest for everything that might reveal some sort of kinship, attraction, or secretly shared nature within them, but, on the contrary, in discriminating ..." (Foucault, 1970:55).

3. Episteme and Social Transformation

Discussion so far in this chapter has sought to emphasise the necessity for considering the specificity of determinate discursive formations, such as discourse on the regulation of labour and the control of idleness, within the limits of a hierarchy of concepts concerning the social formation and its relations of production and conditions of existence. Illustrative material from English legislation on the control and punishment of vagabondage and begging has been provided and attempts have been made to relate such discursive formations to the conditions of existence of feudal relations of production. In the present section, this mode of analysis will be applied to what might be termed the moment of transition of the British national economy from feudal to capitalist relations. This is not to suggest, however, that 'feudalism' ended at a particular moment in British history and that 'capitalism' appeared. Nor is it to suggest that 'feudalism' was laying the foundations for 'capitalism'. The transformation of social relations is a matter of specific calculation and political practice on a number of fronts: 'advances' are made in some contexts whilst struggles are lost or reversed in others. Given the specific set of concepts by which feudal and capitalist relations of production are circumscribed, it is possible to argue that within that period which Foucault calls the Classical episteme certain discourses on labour and idleness can be more appropriately located with feudal rather than capitalist relations, and vice versa.

'Social formation' is a concept and has theoretical conditions

of existence. Within the flexibility of these conditions it is possible to suggest that some may be more conducive to change in specific directions than others. For example, Hindess and Hirst discuss specific forms of feudalism which are more likely to give rise to capitalism than others (1975:256-9). This does not imply any inevitability and it does not suggest that forms of relations taken in one social formation will necessarily not be conducive to another social formation. (28) Foucault's concept of the episteme will once again be used, then, heuristically whilst denying the incrementalism which slips into Foucault's discourse. (29)

(i) The Settlement Act and Labour Mobility. Two statutes, instituted in the 17th century, were to remain the legal cornerstones in discourse on the poor until well into the 20th century. The Act of 43 Elizabeth I, cap.2 (1601) "... was destined to remain on the statute book, much modified in practice but with its basic wording unaltered ... until 1948 ..." (Bruce, 1973:1). The other Act, described by Adam Smith as "this ill-contrived law of settlements"

28. Capitalist relations of production tolerate a large degree of interference in the basic commodity form of social relations. In the British national economy, for example, health, education and welfare services have largely been socialised but this does not imply that the British formation is 'nearer' to being a social formation with socialist relations of production than, say, the USA.

29. At one point, Foucault describes the shift from mediaeval to Classical episteme as "... an immense reorganisation of culture ... of which the Classical age was the first and perhaps the most important stage, since it was responsible for the new arrangement in which we are still caught ..." (1970:43). The "we" in question, of course, is the occidental world and reflects the Weberian notion of Western rationalism.

(Webb and Webb, 1927:331), although similarly much amended, was also to remain into the present century. In addition, as Rose suggests, both Acts were "... merely a codification of existing practice" (1971:12). The power of the legal word should not be minimised: it provides conditions of existence of practices caught within its purview. Although additional legislation may alter its scope and case law its interpretation, it remains as much a conditions of their existence as they do an instance of its modification. Nevertheless, laws have determinate conditions within which they are applied, interpreted and modified. It would be a serious error, therefore, to presume that the 'welfare' which commentators note as a facet of modern social policy, and which they trace to the Poor Laws (as either its positive or its negative origin), is the same concern for 'welfare' which instituted those Acts.

"The notion that each man 'belonged' to a certain place ...", Poynter has written, "... can be traced back in English society ..." (1969:4). English feudal relations of production undoubtedly witnessed a period in which the majority of the population was effectively bound to the land. Legislation against vagabondage often ordered the return of the culprit to his place of birth or last permanent domicile in an effort to maintain the status quo ante. The "Act for the better Relief of the Poor", known more commonly as the Settlement Act of 1662 ⁽³⁰⁾ may be seen as the mere codification of existing practices but it also illustrates a moment of epistemological

30. 14 Charles II, cap.12.

discontinuity. The Act created specific definitions of settlement: residence in a parish for forty days as a householder, sojourner, apprentice, or servant; the renting of a tenement of ten pounds or more; the giving of security not to become liable to poor relief. By I James II, cap.17 (1685) the forty days rule was to begin not from the moment when the newcomer settled in the parish but from the moment when he or she had delivered written notice to the Poor Law officials (overseers or church wardens) of place of abode and size of family. (31) Given that poor relief was based upon a system of public taxation, it is understandable that parishes attracting migrant workers should wish to control the definition of who should qualify for poor relief. Importantly, then, the Act did not simply confirm or re-establish existing 'natural' settlements but, rather, created settlement. The power of the word did not reside in the duplication of an existing order, as was characteristic of the mediaeval episteme, rather, it sought to order the world through processes of discrimination. Thus, by an Act of 1691, registers of the poor were to be regularly reviewed so that those no longer entitled to relief could be removed from the list and, in 1722, legislation ordered that those refusing to be lodged in poor law property for the purpose of being set to work were to be "... put out of the book in which the names of persons who ought to receive relief are registered, and shall

31. By 3 William and Mary, cap.11 (1691) such notice was to be publicly displayed in church. In addition, this Act gave settlement to: anyone holding public office in the parish for one year; anyone paying public taxes; and those being hired in the parish for a year.

not be entitled to ask or receive relief ..." (quoted by Nicholls, 1904:14). Discourse, then, no longer signified a status established elsewhere (by God, for example), it established that status.

In the transition from feudal to capitalist relations within the British national economy, the contrast and conflict between town and country becomes acute. (32) Towns were sites of formations existing within feudal relations but often in antagonism with them. Guilds of craftsmen and merchant capital represented forms of production with their own conditions of existence. Poor Law legislation can be seen to reflect, in part and in varying ways, this class antagonism. Poynter, for example, sees the Law of Settlement as a victory for entrenched localism over central state control (1969:4). The Webbs are more specific and see the Act as a victory for the farmers who gained, in effect, a captive labour force. By creating what might be described as an agricultural 'reserve army', the Settlement Act effectively kept agricultural wages low (1927:330). But as the Webbs note themselves, the Act did not prevent mobility of the workforce: it regulated it. Workers migrating from country areas where employment opportunities were restricted because of the rationalization of production (enclosures; improvements in husbandry); the emphasis upon animal husbandry rather than agriculture; and the seasonal nature of the work, either found work and lodgings in the towns and cities or

32. Marx and Engels wrote:

"The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests".
(The German Ideology, in McLellan, 1978:161).

were 'removed' to their place of settlement lest they made claims for poor relief. Because of the seasonal nature of the work, labour brought into an area could be 'removed' before qualifications to settlement in that parish were achieved (that is, after 1691, not having been hired for more than one year). The argument that the Settlement Laws were an affront to the freedom of labour mobility is an argument from another time. (33) The concepts of settlement and removal existed in law into the 20th century and it is unlikely that they seriously interfered with the availability of labour under capitalist relations. As Bruce notes (1973:5), those removed were more likely to be the least able-bodied, those fit to work often being given certificates by their parishes of settlement to indemnify receiving parishes against any claim to relief (and see Webb and Webb, 1927:336-7). (34)

Rose (1976), like Poynter, suggests that the Settlement Laws reflected the protection of local autonomy and control over poor relief. Legislation, however, has conditions of existence which determine the

33. Pitt, for example in 1796, felt that the law had "... contributed to fetter the circulation of labour ..."; had "... prevented the workman from going to the market where he could dispose of his industry to the greatest advantage, and the capitalist from employing the person qualified to procure him the best return for his advances" (Quoted by Nicholls, 1904:118-9).

34. Rose (1976) describes the use of transfer payments between parishes. Ashforth (1976:144) records that, in 1837, one-fifth of Sheffield's and almost half of Nottingham's paupers were non-settled. The law was gradually modified throughout the 19th century: by 1795 a person had to be actually chargeable on the parish before removal occurred; in 1846, legislation made removal illegal after 5 years of residence; in 1861 this was reduced to 3 years and in 1865 to one year. Prohibition of removal did not, however, necessarily confer settlement and a 'right' to relief.

legitimacy and authority of the "instance of regulation" and the relative influence of other agents over the state. The effectivity of legislation similarly has conditions determined by the level of recognition of the authority of the "instance of regulation" and the agencies formed to enforce it. Under the absolute monarchy of Charles I, for example, a Commission was created in 1630 "... for putting in execution the laws for the relief of the poor" (Nicholls, 1898:252-7). Justices of the Peace and poor law officials were blamed for neglecting the various Poor Laws and the commissioners were given authority by the king to make enquiries and to enforce the various statutes. By the establishment of the Commission, the sovereign attempted to institute a hierarchy of control. Justices of the Peace, for example, were to meet every month to enquire of overseers, churchwardens and constables how they were performing their duties. Where neglect of duties was discovered, justices were to inflict punishments according to the law. Every quarter, the justices were to report the results of these enquiries to the high sheriff, who, within fourteen days, was to deliver the information to the justices of assize. They, in their turn, were to report to the commissioners. (35)

35. The Webbs note that from 1590 to 1640 there was "... an almost continuous series of letters, instructions and orders, emanating from ... the Privy Council or some members of it ... insisting that the statutes for the relief of the poor [etc.] ... be put in operation" (1927:78). For the Webbs, this period witnessed the establishment of "... a highly organized system of Local Government ..." (ibid.:79). It is clear that the effective implementation of the various Poor Laws depended upon their supervision by local magistrates. The effectiveness of Charles I's attempted control can be glimpsed in the evidence given by the Webbs: in 1632 the high sheriffs were adjured to obtain outstanding reports from justices; by the end of 1633 Judges were being asked to find out which justices had defaulted; by mid 1635 Judges are again being reminded that they must insist upon justices making returns (ibid.:78).

The Settlement Act of 1662, however, cites as one cause of the ever increasing body of the poor "... the neglect of the faithful execution of ... laws and statutes ..." (Nicholls, 1898:280).

The Settlement Act may well have had important consequences for local autonomy; nevertheless, the interests it served and its impact cannot simply be read-off from the struggle between local and central governance. George Coode, for instance, noted in 1851 that the Bill had been chiefly framed and supported in Parliament by MPs from the metropolis, who, following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, were anxious about the increasing pauper population in the capital. The ten pound rental qualification could have had relevance only in that city (Nicholls, 1898:281). In addition, however, the Act specifically declared "... that it shall be lawful ... for any person ... to go into any county, parish, or place, to work in time of harvest, or at any time to work at any other work, so that he carry with him a certificate from the minister ... the churchwarden and ... the overseer ... that he has a dwelling and is declared an inhabitant there". In that respect, the labour needs both of farmers and manufacturers were, ostensibly at least, catered for by the Act. What property owners clearly did not want was to have to meet excessive poor rates during trade fluctuations or because of the seasonal nature of the enterprise. There was also the danger of double payment of relief as workers made their way from the towns during a period of unemployment and moved back to their rural settlement.

(ii) An Economy of Suspended Rights

"Analyse punitive methods not simply as consequences of legislation or as indicators of social structures, but as techniques possessing their own specificity in the more general field of other ways of exercising power" (Foucault, 1977:23).

Vagabondage, in the 16th century, was seen as the cause of all manner of "heinous offences and great enormities, to the high displeasure of God, the unquietation and damage of the king's people, and to the marvellous disturbance of the common weal". (36) Its punishment required a suitably visible form: "... men will remember public exhibition, the pillory, torture and pain duly observed" (Foucault, 1977:34). Hence vagabonds were to be taken to the local market town, tied naked to a cart, and beaten with whips throughout the town. Some three hundred years later, we witness the statutory demolition of punishment as spectacle. (37) As Foucault records, punishment is "... an aspect of the sovereign's right to make war on his enemies ..." (ibid.:48). Punishment was the legal reaction of sovereign power and, as such, left its perpetual mark as the surface sign of its perpetual existence and authority. The 17th century was a period of dynastic insecurity after the death of James I in 1625. Appropriately, the Classical episteme stamped order upon the world. Knowledge no longer simply reacted to an already existing order, it questioned the relationship between sign and signified. In the 16th century, "... the value of language lay in the fact that it was the

36. Preamble to 22 Henry VIII, cap.12 (1530), quoted by Nicholls, (1898:115).

37. The use of the pillory was abolished for most offences in 1816 and for all in 1837; in 1817 the public whipping of female offenders was abolished; the hanging of the bodies of criminals in chains ended in 1834, as did the branding of criminals. Other statutes: reduced the penalty for concealment of birth from death to 2 years imprisonment (1809); reduced penalties for the delivery of bastard children (1810); and removed the requirement that families in receipt of poor relief were to wear a "large Roman P together with the first letter of the name of the Parish" on their clothing (1810).

sign of things" (Foucault, 1970:33). To brand the body ("V" for vagabond) was merely to make a status indelible. With the Classical age, however, "The profound kinship of language with the world was ... dissolved" (ibid.:43). From that moment, language organized, distributed and categorized. *see Parker Inch*

In 1696, 8 and 9 William III, cap.30 ordered that the families of those legitimately receiving relief were to wear a large letter "P" and the initial letter of their parish upon their clothing in order that money "... may not be misapplied and consumed by the idle, sturdy, and disorderly beggars" (Nicholls, 1898:341). Language as sign thereby discriminates and categorizes. In 1698, 11 William III, cap.18 sought to legislate against those using "counterfeit passes, testimonials, or characters" to abuse the "charitable intentions" of others (ibid.:347). Language as sign is interrogated as to the veracity of its significations. Punishment for the crimes of failing to wear the 'badge' of poverty and for using counterfeit documents was committal to a house of correction.

If the 16th century witnessed harsh legislation against indolence as the means of restoring vagrants to their natural work environment, the 17th century saw an increasing emphasis upon the productive value of all idle bodies. (38) Poor rates were seen as increasingly burdensome and it seemed to many an illogical practice to give money in relief to those able to work in some capacity. In 1698, Nicholls records, the king's speech to Parliament spoke of the desirability of

38. The Webbs note that "What the writers of the latter part of the seventeenth century had in view was largely, and even mainly, making the labour of the poor into a source of actual profit to the nation" (1927:102).

employing the poor, thereby both increasing manufactures and reducing poor rates. In the following year the king expressed the view that it was "... extremely desirable that such as are able and willing should not want employment, and such as are obstinate and unwilling should be compelled to labour" (Nicholls, 1898:351). (39)

In fact, around 1660 Sir Matthew Hale was lamenting the failure of parishes to supply stocks to be worked by the poor (Webb and Webb, 1927:97). Hale's remedy was the suggestion that parishes might unite to build workhouses for the housing and employment of the poor and for instructing children in trade (Nicholls, 1898:287-90; Webb and Webb, 1927:103-4). (40)

'Expert' opinion certainly endorsed this approach. Richard Haines, described by the Webbs as an "indefatigable pamphleteer", advocated in 1678 the uniting of parishes in the enterprise of profitable workhouse labour. (41)

No less an individual than John Locke, in a report for his employer, the Board of Trade,

39. The king's speech in 1700 emphasised that the regulation and improvement of trade was "so public a concern" that it required serious thought. This included "setting the poor at work", thereby adding "so many useful hands to be employed in our manufactures and other public occasions" (Quoted by Nicholls, 1898:351).

40. 39 Elizabeth I, cap.5 (1597) had authorised the building, by private donors, of "working houses for the poor". Actual buildings in which "the poor" might be set to work varied considerably, from isolated, small 'poor houses' to large houses of correction. (See Webb and Webb, 1927:215-6).

41. Haines, who suggested the invention of a "spinning engine" for the employment of children, based his notions on the work of one John Gressot who, in 1673, had complained that the poor relief was "employed only to maintain idle persons". He urged, the Webbs record, that all poor persons, young and old, should be employed in spinning and knitting or similar work within their capacities (Webb and Webb, 1927:105).

argued in 1697 that everyone must eat, drink and have shelter and that "... so much goes out of the stock of the kingdom whether they work or no" (Webb and Webb, 1927:111-2). Locke, however, fell back on the standard view that stock ought to be provided to be worked by the poor.

There was, of course, strong and influential feeling against such 'make-work' schemes, illustrated well by Daniel De Foe's pamphlet of 1704 - Giving Alms no Charity, and Employing the Poor a Grievance to the Nation (Webb and Webb, 1927:114-6; Eden, 1928:43-6). De Foe argued: it is "... a regulation of the poor that is wanted in England, not a setting them to work". There was, De Foe believed, sufficient work available and the artificial creation of employment would merely divert work from those willingly undertaking it. Discourse on the economic value of marginal labour, during the Classical period, was divided: it did, however, work within a common set of epistemological conditions of existence.

In the 16th century every man had his rightful domicile. To wander the country without good cause was both unnatural and a source of danger to legitimate travellers. The vagabond, then, was to be whipped and returned "... to the place where he was born ... and there put ... to labour like as a true man oweth to do" (22 Henry VIII, cap.12; 1530). Labour, as the book of "Genesis" proclaimed, was the lot of man. (42) Discourse on wealth in the 16th century similarly

42. "Because you have listened to your wife and have eaten from the tree which I forbade you, accursed shall be the ground on your account. With labour you shall win your food from it all the days of your life" ("Genesis"; 3, 17).

worked within a world created in its completeness by God. Wealth, then, was finite; limited by the supply of precious metals residing within the earth. The epistemological configuration of the Classical episteme, however, was quite different. As Foucault notes, "... wealth becomes whatever is the object of needs and desires ..." (1970:175). Coinage merely represented wealth and allowed it to be circulated and augmented, for example by moving into areas of high employment. (43)

'Feudal relations of production' is a concept which pre-supposes a hierarchy of other concepts, forming the conditions of existence of those relations. Amongst those conditions are discursive regularities which provide an endorsement, whether political, cultural or ideological, of those relations. This thesis is particularly concerned with epistemological conditions of existence of specific bodies of discourse, that is, with the grounds on which they claim veracity as identifiable discursive regularities. Feudal relations of production presumes a body of discourse defining the role of labour and the control of idleness but it does not dictate the form of that discourse or its effectivity. Hence, two discursive regularities are found working in opposition, which we might term the Physiocratic (44) approach and the utilitarian approach following Foucault (1970:189 et seq.). The

43. Rubin writes of "Fully-fledge mercantilism", as "... above all a policy of protectionism" (1979:31): one nation's gains in wealth were another's losses. Later mercantilism, within the Classical period, sought to manipulate this flow of money not merely to hoard it but to control its supply in relation to prices, wages and population.

44. Physiocracy, or the rule of nature.

concept of feudal relations does not dictate to this conflict, nor does it decide its outcome.

The epistemological conditions for the formation of discourse on wealth within the Classical episteme characterise Man's relationship with the world as an active, ordering and productive one. Man no longer reads through the sign for the order contained within the signified, rather he orders and arranges the world through signs. Classical discourse on wealth emphasised Man's capacity to augment it through time and progress. Physiocratic discourse, however, located the source of that augmentation in the fecundity of the earth, (45) whilst the utilitarian emphasis lay with the satisfaction of human need through the industrial production process. (46) Both bodies of discourse valued labour as the medium through which wealth was realised, that is, labour was a necessary element in the production of wealth. Relatively speaking, then, the utilitarian valued labour more highly to the extent that industrial production was more labour intensive than agricultural production.

Marxist discourse usually portrays this period (classified here as the Classical age) as the moment of 'primitive accumulation' and, in

45. The Physiocratic movement, though occurring in France, based its ontological primacy of the land on the work of the English theorist Cantillon. Cantillon did not believe that industrial production created value: the apparent increase was nothing more than value consumed by the worker (in subsistence) and the entrepreneur (in profit) and paid for out of ground rent (Foucault, 1970:193).

46. "'The value of all commodities derives from their usefulness' (that is, their ability to 'satisfy human wants and needs'), and it changes with changes in the 'humour and the whims of the people who make use of them'" (Rubin, 1979:66-7, quoting Nicholas Barbon, an English contemporary of Locke).

the British context, it witnesses the expansion of merchant and industrial capital and the development of the capitalist farmer. But we have not stepped outside the concept of feudal relations for it is simply the wisdom of hindsight which demands that we seek in every twist and turn of this period the untangling of a form which is already and inevitably that of 'capitalism'.

Speaking of Physiocratic and utilitarian discourse, Foucault insists: "There is no difference between these two modes of analysis other than the point of origin and the direction chosen to traverse a network of necessity that remains identical in both" (1970:191). Having identified the general epistemological conditions of existence of the discourses, Foucault chooses to undermine their individual and specific effects. Foucault's concept of the episteme hegemonises all discourse every bit as much as the Marxist concept of mode of production. It is being suggested here that, within the concept of feudal relations of production, two discourses on wealth can be accommodated in terms of their epistemological conditions. This is not to pronounce on their ideological and political conditions of formation. Foucault writes: "Perhaps it would have been simpler to say that the Physiocrats represented the landowners and the 'utilitarians' the merchants and entrepreneurs". But, Foucault reminds his readers, his enterprise is 'archaeological' and is concerned to define "... the conditions on the basis of which it was possible to conceive of both 'physiocratic' and 'utilitarian' knowledge ..." (1970: 200.). Foucault is interested in the specificity of discursive formations which cannot be reduced to mere reflections of economic

relations. Physiocratic and utilitarian discourse emphasised the importance of labour in the realisation of wealth; they disagreed over how this labour should be used. Within this shared principle of the nature of wealth and the relevance of labour the problem of idleness had to be solved. The principle was stated thus by Josiah Child, chairman of the East India Company, in 1670:

"The radical error I esteem to be leaving it to the care of every parish to maintain their own poor only [...] the conflux of poor to a city or nation well managed, is in effect the conflux of riches to that city or nation; and therefore the subtle Dutch receive and relieve, or employ, all that come to them ..." (New Discourse of Trade, quoted by Webb and Webb, 1927:103; and Eden, 1928:31-2).

If, like De Foe, you believed there was work available for all who wanted it then there might well be advantages in a regulation of the poor which was also a means of having them work for their keep. In the compulsory employment of the idle we see that "economy of suspended rights" spoken of by Foucault (1977:11). In a free market, it was believed, wages would settle at subsistence level; (47) it was only fluctuations in trade and the supply of labour which caused wages to rise. Marginal labour, whether reluctant or substandard could automatically be remunerated at the lowest level possible. In 1676 we find Thomas Firmin instituting employment for 1700 poor people to work as flax dressers, carders, combers, spinners and weavers.

47. Foucault (1970:222), referring to the work of Cantillon, who died in 1734, notes: "A man's labour was ... equal to the value of the quantity of nourishment necessary to maintain him and his family for as long as a given task lasted".

The Webbs describe his establishment as "at once school and factory, wholesale warehouse and retail shop" (1927:106-7). Children, from the age of three, were taught to read and to spin (48) and a number of "ancients" and "nearly blind" persons were also employed.

Earnings were said to be near subsistence level. Eden describes Firmin's establishment as a workhouse and explains something of the economic pressures at work. Legislation throughout the 17th century had sought to encourage the domestic manufacture of woollen goods and protect the home market from imported goods (see Nicholls, 1898:290-313), Firmin, however, still found problems in selling his cloth manufactured so cheaply in his workhouse because, he believed, "... the commodity is brought over so cheap that you will never be able to sell without much loss" (quoted by Eden, 1928:34). This loss could, however, be viewed as a national investment in labour: "... it is better to lose something in a way that will make our poor people better and skilful, than to suffer them to live in idleness, to their utter ruin and a greater damage to the Kingdom" (ibid.). That this was a national and not just a personal investment is evident from Firmin's suggestion for an import duty: "... our people will neither work so hard nor live so cheap as generally the Poor of other places do" he adds (ibid.). The economy of suspended rights, then, was to apply only to the idle.

48. Andrew Yarranton, in his writings on the employment of the poor, drew inspiration from industrial schools observed in Germany which trained and employed girls, from the age of 6, "sometimes 200 in a single room, for spinning linen yarn" (quoted by Webb and Webb, 1927: 105, footnote).

In 1696, the city of Bristol applied to Parliament for a Local Act under which parishes united for poor relief matters. Based on the ideas of John Cary, it was intended to build a large workhouse to employ all the poor and relieve those unable to work. Its governor was to have power to force all the unemployed poor to work in the 'house' and to take in children unable to be maintained by their parents and there to breed them to labour and principles of virtue. The Corporation of the Poor thus established is said by commentators to have been sufficiently successful to have led to imitation by seven other towns in 1698, and others later ⁽⁴⁹⁾ (Webb and Webb, 1927:120-1; Nicholls, 1898:354). And yet, as the Webbs and Eden record, Cary's plan for employing the poor was an economic failure. The economy of suspended rights was not a mere replication of the mediaeval plan to control idleness through fear but neither was it simply a way of utilizing marginal labour. Central to discourse on labour is the manipulation of its quality in terms of skills and application. Within the conditions of Classical discourse on wealth, the fecundity of nature was immense but not infinite and, even within utilitarian discourse, the satisfaction of changing needs was achieved through an augmentation of wealth which was primarily a re-ordering of that body of values. It was Man's particular ability that he could manipulate wealth. The quality of labour was an important aspect of

49. The preamble to 2 and 3 Anne, cap.8 (1703) which allowed for the erecting of a workhouse in Worcester notes "the good success of several workhouses lately erected" (see Nicholls, 1898:364-5).

that manipulation but it was not the sole or primary condition of the production of wealth. (50) Cary, then, eventually resorted to 'farming out' the poor to contractors. As the Webbs put it, a "workhouse test" was effectively established under which relief was offered at the price either of confinement in the workhouse or of being farmed out to a contractor empowered to give each worker "a small gratuity as he thought fit" (1927:120). To attempt to make a profit out of reluctant or inadequate labour was like taking the proverbial horse to water. (51) Running parallel with such attempts, then, we see the threat of incarceration in the workhouse being used to deter claims to poor relief, (52) and the use of imprisonment

50. This is a condition which will be associated with the Modern episteme and the concept of capitalist relations of production in the next chapter. In this context, see the discussion of Smith and Ricardo in Chapter 3, section 2, above.

51. As John Bellers put it in 1695: "The best materials for building, put together without order or method, are little better than rubbish, until they are regularly placed ... and the same are mankind until they are regularly and usefully employed" (quoted by the Webbs, 1927:108). Having failed economically, the Bristol authorities seem to have turned again to terror. Joshua Gee, in 1728, wrote: "... the magistrates of Bristol have that city under such excellent regulation that foreign beggars dare not appear ... for as soon as any of them are espied ... they are taken up and whipped" (quoted by Eden, 1928:52).

52. Eden writes: "... at Beverley, Oxford and Maidstone a notice that all applicants for relief would be sent into the Workhouse reduced the numbers by half ..." (1928:52).

against vagabonds. (53)

Rights, then, were suspended in two ways. Bristol's Act of incorporation made entry of the idle into a workhouse compulsory and similar Acts, Worcester's for example, gave guardians of the poor powers to punish misbehaviour within the workhouse. Secondly, in certain areas, receipt of Poor Law relief was made conditional on entry to a workhouse or to being farmed out to contractors. If profits could not be made, then at least rates could be held down. (54) Rights were suspended, it was argued, because such Acts offended what was seen as the spirit of the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 which, it was believed, gave those in need a right to parish assistance. In 1722, 'Knatchbull's Act' consolidated this encroachment by giving general authority to parishes to unite to hire or purchase property as a workhouse and to make entitlement to relief dependent upon entry to such an establishment. (55)

Most Acts of incorporation were associated with England's major trading and manufacturing towns and cities (56) which had to cope with

53. The Act of 1703 permitting Worcester to erect a workhouse (footnote 49 above) also allowed for rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars and idle or disorderly persons to be held for up to 6 months. In 1711, 10 Anne, cap.15 gave Norwich corporate status and the power to detain rogues, vagrants etc. for up to 3 years.

54. "... the advantage of the workhouse to the parish does not arise from what the poor people can do towards their own subsistence, but from the apprehensions the poor have of it. These prompt them to exert and do their utmost to keep themselves off the parish and render them exceedingly averse to submit to come into the house until extreme necessity compels them" (Matthew Marryott, writing in 1725 and quoted by Webb and Webb, 1927:244).

55. 9 George I, cap.7.

56. The City of London, in 1647; Bristol in 1696; Norwich in 1711.

the paradox that it was often cheaper to maintain the unemployed and the unemployable through poor rates than to institute compulsory employment schemes. This legislation cannot be read simply in terms of the capitalist class investing in a permanent pool of surplus labour. Such legislation identifies the powers and duties of local authorities in relation to those unable or unwilling to work; it does not empower capital to retain a labour supply. Interestingly, what can be identified is a subsidiary economy developing around the contracting out of the maintenance of the poor on the basis of tenders and the conveying of vagabonds to their rightful settlement area. (57)

As De Foe warned, it was a regulation of the poor that was wanted. Along with countless schemes to employ the idle (Nicholls, 1904:55), the Hanoverian succession was accompanied by a wave of repressive legislation. The Riot Act of 1714 sought to control combinations gathered together for "tumultuous assembly" and the "disturbance of the public peace". "An Act for Regulating Journeymen Tailors" (1720), on the other hand, sought to control combinations designed "to advance ... wages to unreasonable prices and lessen ... usual hours of work". (58)

In 1717, the declaration that penalties against robbery, larceny and other felonies had proved ineffectual was linked to shortages of

57. There is a lengthy discussion of this method of contracting out the relief of the poor in Webb and Webb (1927:277-313) and of farming out the work of detaining, conveying and maintaining vagrants, at pages 383-7.

58. See Nicholls (1904:2-3, 10-12). The Act of 1720 was extended to workers employed in woollen manufactures in 1725 (*ibid.*:19) and, effectively, against such combinations in any trade in 1749 (*ibid.*:46).

labour in the American colonies and the solution to both problems sought by making commission of the former punishable through penal servitude for seven years in the latter (Nicholls, 1904:4). The same period witnessed the infamous Black Acts. (59) The policing of idleness, then, took a number of economic and political forms, working within a knowledge-power configuration which sought to discriminate in the creation of economic and social order.

(iii) The Natural History of Control

"Natural history did not become possible because men looked harder and more closely. One might say, strictly speaking, that the Classical age used its ingenuity, if not to see as little as possible, at least to restrict deliberately the area of its experience" (Foucault, 1970:132).

Within the Classical episteme, the epistemological conditions of formation of discourse on wealth create an evaluation of labour which must compete with political apprehension of a national and mobile workforce. Discourse on wealth is interwoven with political discourse. (60) In Discipline and Punish, Foucault discusses one of the more visible reasons for the gradual demise of "the sovereign's vengeance" which had been known to induce a catharsis in which 'the

59. To prevent the theft of deer, 1718; to prevent the cutting of wood and the destruction of fences and hedges, 1719; and consolidated by further legislation in 1722. See the discussion of these Acts, and their political and economic background, by E.P. Thompson (1975). In addition to the legislation mentioned it also is worth noting that in 1714 an oath of allegiance was instituted and habeas corpus was suspended in 1714, 1715 and 1722.

60. Foucault writes: "Wealth is a system of signs that are created, multiplied, and modified by men; the theory of wealth is linked throughout to politics" (1970:205).

mob' took sides against authority and with the offender. Within the episteme of the 16th century, punishment was a signifying practice in which the spectacular and ritualised marking of the body made visible the nature of the crime. It therefore required a popular audience in which catharsis would produce a fervour and a violence which was also a sign of allegiance (Foucault, 1977:59). Popular reaction could, however, turn against authority, particularly if the offence had, at one time, been what Foucault calls a "tolerated illegality" (ibid.:82). The Black Acts, for example, interfered with activities which the English peasant had once seen as his birthright to gather wood and to use common-land. Thompson writes that, "It was ... community support which made it difficult to effect the arrest of William Shorter, which led to the fear of rescues when the heavily guarded convoys of prisoners moved to and from London ..." (1975:191).⁽⁶¹⁾ The passing of a law never, of course, guarantees its exercise. Justices of the Peace may have formed a network of control and local governance throughout Britain but allegiances were never certain. The preambles of many of the statutes discussed in this chapter tell of the failures of enforcing legislation seen as unjust or as too harsh. 'Knatchbull's Act' interfered with the magistracy's power to grant

61. Thompson is discussing the support given to 'The Blacks' by forest communities. Elsewhere, Thompson writes: "Certain crimes were outlawed by both codes: a wife or child murderer would be pelted and execrated on the way to Tyburn. [...] But other crimes were actively condoned by whole communities - coining, poaching, the evasion of taxes ... or excise or the press-gang. Smuggling communities lived in a state of constant war with authority ..." (Thompson, 1977:64).

relief to the poor ⁽⁶²⁾ by making relief dependent upon entry to a workhouse, in parishes which had incorporated, and by amending 3 William and Mary, cap.11 so that justices could grant relief only if "oath be made of some reasonable cause for having relief", it having been refused by poor law officials, and upon examination of these officials (Nicholls, 1904:13). But, as the Webbs recount, many justices simply refused to abandon their practices and continued to order 'outdoor relief' (1927:281). It is as well to remember, then, that whilst law provides specific conditions of existence of certain discursive regularities, the effectivity of these conditions depend, to a degree, upon the calculations of agents in the processes in question.

'Knatchbull's Act' can be seen as a rational reaction to the apparent success obtained by incorporations in reducing the cost of the poor by the double action of discouraging claims and setting the residuum to work. This 'workhouse test' left no (legal) room for discrimination, however. In pointing to the contrast between punishment as the sovereign's vengeance and punishment as it came to be practised in the 18th century, Foucault notes that although both sought general deterrence, the 18th century jurist sought a finer calculation of effects:

62. 3 William and Mary, cap.11 (1691), which made it necessary for those to be relieved to be registered, made provision for relief to be ordered by justices for those not so registered.

"... example must refer back to the crime, but in the most discreet way possible and with the greatest possible economy indicate the intervention of power" (1977:93).

An economy of suspended rights which is to balance economic gain against political danger must have room to discriminate and to individualise. It must balance inducement with deterrence. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault suggests that this process of discrimination, this "semio-technique" in which the penal code is linked to processes of individualisation, "was sought in the scientific models of the period. Natural history", he writes, "no doubt offered the most adequate schema: the taxonomy of species according to an uninterrupted gradation" (ibid.:99). The Order of Things spells out the epistemological configuration of the Classical science of natural history.

"... natural history has as a condition of its possibility the common affinity of things and language with representation; but it exists as a task only in so far as things and language happen to be separate. It must therefore reduce this distance between them so as to bring language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and the things observed as close as possible to words" (1970:132).

Natural history is a science of discrimination and classification. What characterised an object was what distinguished it from others. It is important to note, however, that the significance of a characteristic, and its classification, depended upon human intervention.

Natural history, then, supplied a set of major rules in forming the "code-individualization link" (1977:94-9). First, the rule of minimum

quantity which dictated that a penalty must be of just sufficient a discomfort to outweigh the advantages of the offence; secondly, the rule of sufficient ideality by which it is observed that it is the idea of the discomfort of the penalty rather than its corporal reality which produces its effect; thirdly, and relatedly, a penalty must influence the decisions of others, it must have "lateral effects"; fourthly, the rule of perfect certainty dictated that each crime must be associated with a particular penalty; the rule of common truth, demanded that a crime be completely proven; and finally, the rule of optimal specification dictated that all offences be "classified and collected into species from which none of them can escape" (1977:98).

By an Act of 1597, an exhaustive list of those to be punished as rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars was provided. ⁽⁶³⁾ But the three terms were virtually synonymous and their punishment uniform (Nicholls, 1898:182-3). In 1713, however, a consolidating Act, ⁽⁶⁴⁾ which again exhaustively listed those species of idlers to be apprehended as rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars and vagrants, also begins to discriminate. By the rule of optimal specification, the occasional vagrant must be discriminated from the recidivist vagrant. The Act therefore seeks to identify the "dangerous and incorrigible rogue" and those who have "used the trade or life of a common beggar or vagabond for the space of two years last past" and provides a harsher punishment. And by the rule of lateral effects, the penalty as sign must represent the disadvantage

63. 39 Elizabeth I, cap.4. And see footnote 25 above.

64. 13 Anne, cap.26.

of crime to the offender and the retribution it demands for the society that has been wronged.

"The ideal would be for the convict to appear as a sort of rentable property: a slave at the service of all" (Foucault, 1977:109).

(65)

In 1744, a further Act of consolidation (66) made discrimination much more explicit. Three distinct classes of offender were identified: the idle and disorderly; the rogue and vagabond; and the incorrigible rogue. As the Webbs note, each category was distinguished from the next according to an ascending scale of punishment (1927:354). The idle and disorderly person, for example, had a stability to his life which made him less dangerous and less difficult to control. The idle and disorderly man merely threatens to leave his family to the care of the parish or insists upon returning to a parish from which he or she has been legally removed. Other idle and disorderly persons live idly, refusing to work "for the usual wages", or else go begging from door to door. Such offenders were to be committed to a house of correction to carry out hard labour for up to a month. Rogues and vagabonds, however, actually run away and leave their families' care to the parish. Rogues and vagabonds are decidedly peripatetic: they indulge in fraudulent claims to be

65. The punishment for the dangerous and incorrigible rogue and the seasoned vagabond was to be bound to any person or body politic or corporate as an apprentice or servant for employment in Britain or in the colonies for a period of seven years (Nicholls, 1898:379-80).

66. 17 George II, cap.5.

gatherers of alms; occupy themselves in street entertainment (bearwards; minstrels; jugglers; actors); practise the dubious arts of physiognomy, palmistry, and fortune-telling, or pretend to be gypsies, to be seeking work for the harvest or to be soldiers or mariners. Finally, any recidivist rogue and vagabond, or anyone apprehended as a rogue and vagabond who escapes from custody, is to be punished as an incorrigible rogue. Having been whipped, the rogue and vagabond was to be given hard labour for up to six months; the incorrigible rogue for a period not to exceed two years and not less than six months. Should the latter escape from custody or repeat the offence he was to be transported for seven years (Nicholls, 1904:34-7). The rule of optimal specification, then, demands an explicit codification of offences; that of minimum quantity requires the penalties to maintain a certain ratio of severity with the offences. But, in addition, the rule of perfect certainty demands that "... no crime committed must escape the gaze of those whose task it is to dispense justice" (Foucault, 1977:96).⁽⁶⁷⁾ The Act of 1744, then, provided a series of rewards for those apprehending certain classes of these offenders and presenting them to a justice of the peace, a practice begun in 1662 by the Settlement and Removal Act (Webb and Webb,

67. Foucault continues: "Nothing so weakens the machinery of the law than the hope of going unpunished; how could one establish in the minds of the public a strict link between the offence and a penalty if it were affected by a certain coefficient of improbability?" (ibid.). This was a chronic problem for those framing and executing laws on vagrancy. A statistician of the period estimated that there were 60,000 vagrant families in England in 1688 (Webb and Webb, 1927:356. The Webbs provide details of reports from the 17th and 18th centuries which complain of the "great increase of rogues and sturdy beggars", "swarms of beggars", "overrunning" the highways, "infesting the streets" and so on).

1927:369): "... the machinery of justice must be duplicated by an organ of surveillance that would work side by side with it ..."
 (Foucault, 1977:96). Once punished, the offender was to be passed on to his or her place of settlement. The Act notes that at the parish of settlement, the offender was to be employed or placed in a workhouse until employment was obtained and, should the offender refuse to work, the overseer was to take him before a justice in order that he could once again be committed to hard labour. The rule of sufficient ideality, then, demands a punishment as a signifying practice in which the transparency of the punishment as sign creates an immediate link with the offence that is signified.

"Behind the offences of the vagabond, there is laziness; that is what one must fight against. 'One will not succeed by locking beggars up in filthy prisons ...' they will have to be forced to work. 'The best way of punishing them is to employ them'..." (Foucault, 1977:106).

The 'economy of suspended rights' interweaves discourse on wealth with discourse on power and control: such legislation represents what Foucault calls a knowledge-power relation.

(iv) Discontinuity : From Control to 'Discipline'. Discourse on idleness and poverty was conducted through a natural history of control during the 18th century. As a period of transition which we can describe, teleologically, as the transformation from feudal to capitalist relations of production, discourse on wealth and labour in the 17th and 18th centuries worked within epistemological conditions which were consistent with both the concept of feudal and capitalist relations of production. Labour was an important factor in the realisation of

wealth and indolence could not be tolerated. It is likely, however, that it was in the growing industrial centres that the unemployed, unemployable and the vagabond were experienced as a problem in both financial and socio-political terms. Here there would be both a glut of casual work to attract marginal labour and dramatic swings in fortune creating more work in one area and unemployment in another. The richness of the cities and towns would, of course, attract both criminal and mendicant activity. Fluctuations in employment in rural areas, on the other hand, were more likely to be dictated by the seasons and would vary less from year to year. In that sense, the rural working population would be more stable, working at harvest time and at casual labour out of season; growing and nurturing their own produce; and, when times were 'hard', being maintained from the rates. 'Knatchbull's Act', then, is unlikely to have been utilized in rural areas where it would have been unrealistic to expect families to leave their cottages for seasonal residence in a workhouse. 'Gilbert's Act' of 1782 ⁽⁶⁸⁾ emphasises the notion that 'Knatchbull's Act' had been intended as a measure to provide employment and not punishment. The preamble to 'Gilbert's Act' attributes the 'failure' of the earlier Act to improper management of workhouses, noting that "... the poor in many places, instead of finding protection and relief, have been much oppressed thereby" (quoted by Nicholls, 1904:83-4). Writing of the food riots of the 18th century, Thompson has noted:

68. 22 George III, cap.83.

"... the final years of the eighteenth century saw a last desperate effort by the people to reimpose the older moral economy as against the economy of the free market. In this they received some support from old-fashioned J.P.s ..." (1977:73).

Thomas Gilbert was, himself, a 'country gentleman' and a justice of the peace. The Act of 1782, which he introduced, sought to encourage parish incorporation but it specifically legislated that the workhouses controlled by such 'unions' were to be used only for the "indigent by old age, sickness, or infirmities" who were unable to maintain themselves. The able-bodied who could not find employment were to be found work and were to be maintained until such employment was found (Nicholls, 1904:86). According to the Webbs, the Act was not particularly successful. By 1830, only 67 'unions' of some 924 parishes had taken place and nearly all of these were in rural areas (1927:275). However, the Act did provide a legitimacy to the practice of paying 'outdoor' relief, that is, not insisting upon entry to a workhouse and it very effectively gave the initiative back to the justices. The Act was, of course, an enabling statute only and its adoption depended upon the consent of two-thirds of those paying rates on property valued at £5 or over per annum. But once adopted, control was taken out of the hands of the much maligned overseers and church-wardens. The justices were empowered to appoint a guardian of the poor, who was to receive a salary, and a visitor who was to be "respectable in character and fortune, and fit to be put in nomination for the office". Effectively, the poor law administration in these

united parishes was under the control of the visitor and, as Nicholls comments, "... the governing machinery was devised with the view of excluding the ordinary parochial authorities from taking part in it, the whole power being placed in the hand of a higher class" (1904:88). It might be argued, then, that 'Gilbert's Act' was particularly appropriate for rural parishes and that it effectively created two methods of relieving poverty. Rural conditions demanded a flexible system which would allow, in effect, the seasonal supplementing of wages from the poor rates, a large proportion of which was undoubtedly paid by the landowners and capitalist farmers.

"Not wages, but the cost of bread", writes Thompson, "was the most sensitive indicator of popular discontent" (1977:68). In the middle of the 18th century, the Physiocrat Quesnay was writing: "The daily wage of a labourer is fixed more or less naturally on the basis of the price of corn" (quoted in Rubin, 1979:122). Competition for employment kept wages at subsistence level, at least according to the 'iron law of wages'. Wages are, in fact, the outcome of negotiation and struggle between employer and employed and mention has already been made of legal attempts to restrict combinations of craftsmen and labourers. Such legal conditions, however, merely determine the parameters within which struggle for wage rates is conducted. The preamble to 8 George III, cap.17 (1768), for example, makes it clear what the dissonance might be between legislative intention and determinate circumstances when it records that doubts and difficulties had arisen over prosecutions under the 1720 Act designed to restrict

combinations of journeymen tailors. It is likely that in the industrial centres, skilled labour was sufficiently in demand to keep wages above basic levels. In rural areas, however, subsistence wages were common. That 'moral economy' mentioned by Thompson endorsed a traditional relation between landlord and peasant which guaranteed subsistence in good times and bad. Marx has written:

"As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for an agricultural labouring population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being, as in non-agricultural industries, compensated by a greater attraction. [...] But the constant flow towards the towns pre-supposes, in the country itself, a constant latent surplus-population ... The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism" (Marx, 1977:601-2 and see Thompson, 1977:244).

There are, however, no laws dictating the features of this process. In the British context, the industrial centres experienced a demand for labour which attracted workers from the agricultural centres. In terms of the epistemological conditions of relations in the rural areas, however, it might be said that discourse on labour and wealth dictated wage rates in line with the price of bread. Corn, the sign of nature's fecundity and the 'staff of life', entered into a process of signification by which wealth and subsistence might be gauged. The price of bread was a "sensitive indicator of popular discontent" precisely because it was linked, in a series of representations, with wages. It is a mark of the embedded nature of this signification that 'Gilbert's Act' facilitated the payment of relief in line with

fluctuations in the price of bread.

The last decade of the 18th century saw a series of bad harvests which served to fan the flames of popular discontent. (69) In 1795, the price of corn reached such a height that food riots broke out up and down the country (Thompson, 1977:156; Webb and Webb, 1927:173). In 1793, the Dorsetshire justices formally adopted a policy for making up wages from the poor rates and, in January 1795, justices in Buckinghamshire ordered the wages of married men to be made up to a minimum of six shillings a week, with an additional shilling for each child (Webb and Webb, 1927:177). In May 1795, the now famous meeting of justices occurred in Berkshire in the Speenhamland district. Those attending, seven clergymen and thirteen squires, decided against fixing wages by law (70) and adopted a policy of making up wages from the poor rates according to a scale relating family size to the price of a 'gallon loaf' (ibid.:177-8).

One would not wish to deny the variety of concerns in the minds of those 'country gentlemen' who, in Thompson's words, sought to reimpose "the old paternalist moral economy" (1977:72). Concern for the health and welfare of the "poor industrious labourers" there must have been.

69. Thompson notes: "... the agitation of the 1790s, although it lasted only five years (1792-6) was extraordinarily intensive and far-reaching. It altered the sub-political attitudes of the people, affected class alignments, and initiated traditions which stretch forward into the present century" (1977:111).

70. In October 1795, the justices of Bury St Edmunds resolved to introduce a Bill to Parliament regulating wages by the price of corn and Arthur Young, following this meeting, canvassed the views of "the correspondents of the Board of Agriculture". Most replies, however, were critical and even adverse (Webb and Webb, 1927:174-5).

Concern about their potential for retaliatory violence there undoubtedly was in this period which Thompson has called the period of formation of the 'working class' (1977:212 and passim). Interwoven with this discourse on philanthropy and control, however, is an economic assessment of the value of labour as not merely the medium through which wealth was realised but the means of its production. In their Minutes of July 1795, the Hampshire Quarter Sessions argued for a realistic wage to be paid by the farmer to the labourer, "requisite to support his frame for its longest continuance and its best use". The gains from such action were to be manifold: farmers -

"... would be gaining, not losing by the change; in short, ... the better support of their labourers is recommended for their own advantage; immediately, on a balance of work done, and mediately, by length of life, sickness prevented, spirit contented, honesty retained, quiet established, order confirmed and security gained" (quoted by Webb and Webb, 1927:176).

Foucault locates the outer-limits which mark the genesis and final revelation of the Modern episteme as the years 1775 and 1825 but he situates its epigenesis in the period 1795 to 1800 (1970:221). It is Smith's The Wealth of Nations (1776) which begins, for Foucault, the discontinuity in the Classical analysis of wealth. In many respects, Smith's works were an endorsement of the utilitarian discourse on wealth which provided theoretical and ideological legitimation for the growing manufacturing sector of the national economy. Value was expressed through men's needs: labour, as a measure of this value, was a convention which brought order to the

chaos of human desire. Smith, however, made labour a focus of attention for wealth could be augmented either by increasing the productivity of labour or increasing its supply. (71)

Despite the 'obvious' benefits to farmers of a marginal increase in the wages of farm labourers, the 'Speenhamland System' represents a failure to persuade farmers of these gains. Farmers argued that any emergency increase in wages would be difficult to reduce later when the emergency was over (Webb and Webb, 1927:173) and besides, "... labourers became saucy if they had resources ..." (Poynter, 1969:xviii). Hogg has maintained that the defence of the poor laws became the principle mode "of resistance to the consolidation of industrial capitalism" (1979:11) and Thompson has described them as "the labourer's last 'inheritance'" (1977:247). And yet, for the country labourer they were both friend and foe. The original Speenhamland decision is a model of Classical precision in which taxinomia and mathesis are finely interwoven. (72) For every rise or fall by one penny in the price of a gallon loaf, the minimum income of a labourer was to rise or fall by three pence for himself and by one penny for each of his dependents. The Gloucestershire magistrates, in their turn, produced a table of minimum wages for families of ten different sizes and bread at fifteen different prices (Webb and Webb, 1927:179,

71. Smith's major economic treatise is accordingly divided into an analysis of the division of labour and the analysis of capital and productive labour (Rubin, 1979:177).

72. "The arithmetical precision with which it seemed to regulate the relief gave almost the glamour of science to its policy of making up wages out of the rates" (Webb and Webb, 1927:179).

footnote). In effect, wages at the subsistence level were maintained which avoided irreversible wage increases. Little wonder that Malthus - defender of the landed interest, opponent of the Poor Laws - could not "see what else could have been done" (Webb and Webb, 1927:179). Ironically, the system was supported by Pitt for its encouragement of large families (Bruce, 1961:42). As Pitt argued in 1796, in opposition to Whitbread's proposal for a minimum wages bill, the ancient statutes regulating wages had been enacted to protect the industry of the country against combinations of labourers and not to remedy any disproportion between wages and prices. "Trade, industry, and barter would always find their own level, and be impeded by regulations which violated their natural operation" he argued (Nicholls, 1904:118). The 'Speenhamland System' may, then, have been an endorsement of the farm labourer's right to a living wage ⁽⁷³⁾ and it may represent the defiant gesture of the landed aristocracy against the encroachment of capitalist relations of production but it received its sanction from within the confines of a political economy promulgating a doctrine of laissez faire. In 1796, the system received formal, legislative endorsement. By 36 George III, cap.10, guardians of incorporated parishes were enabled to base their

73. For Mishra, 'Speenhamland' "... represents a sort of high water mark in the recognition of social right within a pre-modern framework of welfare" (1977:23). 'Natural right' within Physiocratic discourse was the driving force of economic development. For Smith and later political economists, however, 'natural right' is substituted by 'natural law': it is human nature - homo economicus - which leads to progress (Rubin, 1979:167-9). In 1830, Nassau Senior was to denounce the 'allowance system' because it condemned men to pauperism and slavery. "The instance the labourer is paid, not according to his value, but ... his wants, he ceases to be a free man" (quoted by Poynter, 1969:304).

allowances to the poor on the price of wheat and by 36 George III, cap.23, 'Knatchbull's Act' was amended to allow the payment of 'outdoor' relief (Nicholls, 1904:115). Subsequently, the system of making up wages spread to most counties in England and Wales, primarily in rural parishes but also in the woollen manufacturing Midland counties (Webb and Webb, 1927:181).

As Thompson points out, the agricultural labourers formed the largest group of workers in any industry, even at this moment of transformation (1977:233). The mobilisation of such a rural workforce and the policing of idleness clearly rested less on the enforcement imposed by a penalty of the house of industry and the workhouse and more upon a network of supervision based upon a 'paternalistic moral economy'. The rural worker had a sense of fatalism, Thompson believes, which inhibited the open expression of grievances (1977:249). If this period is a moment of discontinuity which was reflected in deep-seated changes in the natural history of control, in a new political economy of production and labour, and in a new penalty of 'discipline' (Foucault, 1977:137), then it is probable that it became most apparent in the industrialised urban centres.

In Discipline and Punish, Foucault's discourse noticeably 'frees' itself from his theoretical protocol of historical analysis. His earlier discussions of epistemei and discontinuity struggled to control a latent Weberian teleology of rationalisation as historical progress. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault develops an essentialist and ambiguous concept of 'discipline' as the outcome of a cumulative history

of penalty ⁽⁷⁴⁾ (Fine, 1979b). The excavation of discourses on wealth, labour, and the policing of idleness offered in this chapter has attempted to remain true to the protocol set down in earlier chapters. The definition and supervision of a national labour force, and the consequent supervision of those unable or unwilling to work, has been examined, within the confines of the concept of feudal relations of production. In particular, the epistemological conditions of existence of discourses on labour, wealth and idleness have been examined and their specificity and effectivity within the determinate social formation of the British national economy have been illustrated. Paul Hirst has suggested that Foucault's attempt to fuse the aims, form, content and effectivity of the various 'disciplines', rests upon "two dubious devices: the model of the Panopticon as the essence of all disciplinary power, and the 'body' as the common referent of all disciplinary surveillance and action" (1980:91). That Foucault should attempt to offer what amounts to another 'one-dimensional man' thesis is, perhaps, even more disappointing than the weak foundation on which it is built. Foucault's concept of the episteme, in fact, merely defined the form within which 'the order of things' could be arranged. In arguing that discourse on language,

74. For example, in discussing "models of punitive imprisonment" he notes that the Rasphuis of Amsterdam formed the historical "... link between the theory, so characteristic of the sixteenth century, of a pedagogical and spiritual transformation of individuals ..., and the penitentiary techniques conceived in the second half of the eighteenth century" (1977:120-1). Later, when discussing "the utilitarian rationalization of detail" we learn that "The classical age did not initiate it; rather it accelerated it, changed its scale, gave it precise instruments ..." (ibid.:139; emphasis added).

living things, and wealth in the 18th century had the same epistemological conditions of existence, Foucault was not saying, ipso facto, that they shared a common identity. Unfortunately, this is precisely what he does argue in Discipline and Punish. Ignoring his own injunction to see power not simply in negative terms but also as that which "produces reality" (1977:23, 194), Foucault transforms his essentially neutral dualism of "knowledge-power" into an insidious 'rational-manipulation'. Much as Luke's 'third-dimension' of power, Foucault's "micro-physics of power" permeates every facet of existence "right down into the depths of society" (1977:27). Thus, as Bob Fine has noted, Foucault does not write a critique of "a determinate form of social organisation" but of all rational organisation (1979b:88). As such, Discipline and Punish, like Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man "breeds a deep pessimism about the possibilities of historical transformation" (Fine, *ibid.*:94).

What we can best learn from Discipline and Punish is that there are "... innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of ... power relations" (1977:27). It is clear from the few direct references made by Foucault in Discipline and Punish that the emergence of capitalist relations of production was of relevance to his studies (1977:85, for example; and see 1970:345). In allowing the concepts of episteme and 'discipline' to hegemonise discourse Foucault, like Althusser, portrays the social formation as a structured totality and offers a functionalist interpretation whose terms demand both that the structure determine the nature of social

relations and that social relations be an essential condition of existence of the structure. (75) However, whereas Althusser's target of analysis is capitalist relations of production, Foucault appears to be dealing with an hypostasized notion of power.

Nevertheless, ultimately both encourage a conspiratorial view of the consolidation of capitalist social relations. (76) It will be suggested in this thesis that the specificity of Foucault's discourse on penology can be rescued from the essentialism with which it is intertwined and brought in line with the protocol of The Order of Things.

That the industrialisation of a national economy requires a more carefully regimented workforce than is necessary under feudal relations is something of a truism. Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class discusses just such a process and his paper on the discipline of time (1967) is acknowledged as a major contribution to such a debate. Foucault's Discipline and Punish appeals to radical

75. Foucault writes that "Discipline makes possible the operation of a relational power that sustains itself by its own mechanism ..." (1977: 177) and that "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (1977:170). And see Dews, 1979:152; the parallels with Althusser's notion of "interpellation" are clear.

76. This is apparent in the purposive vocabulary used by Foucault who describes the "new micro-physics" of power as "small acts of cunning" which adopt "a tactic" characterised by "attentive 'malevolence' that turns everything to account" (1977:139). This vocabulary which nevertheless fails to identify the acting subject is often adopted by followers of Foucault; see for example Dews' discussion of the "Nouvelle Philosophie" (1979); and Garland's discussion of the "task" of the disciplines who must "... ensure that the ... threat posed to the system of class domination by the conditions of 'advanced democracy' [are] ... counterbalanced by an equally extensive and thoroughgoing regulation and discipline" (1981:37).

theorists interested in social control under 'capitalist' relations. Foucault's 'disciplines', however, are not mere agencies of social control; like Althusser's ideological state apparatuses, they are involved in the formation of disciplined subjects (Dews, 1979:152). NU This insidious progress of rational despotism is made possible in Foucault's discourse by ignoring a basic tenet of his earlier work which warned against 'placing the present at the origin'.

"Disciplinary methods", then, are said to have been long in existence, becoming "general formulas of domination" only by the 17th and 18th centuries (1977:137). Throughout his text, Foucault elides any distinction between 'the disciplines' (what, in earlier works, he termed discursive regularities) and 'discipline' and, consequently, "disciplinary methods" are allowed to play the role of pre-history for 'the disciplines'. What is important about Foucault's discussion of 'discipline' is the notion that "... there can be no system of 'discipline' ... without definite forms of subjectivication" (Hirst, 1980:90). As Foucault was at pains to show in The Order of Things, the Modern episteme is characterised by a radically new mode of conceptualisation of Man. This represents a definite and distinct form of subjectivication to which must correspond a definite and distinct form of 'discipline'. Foucault's excursion into materialism leads him to over-emphasise the body "as the common referent of all disciplinary surveillance and action" (Hirst, 1980:91). That "economy of suspended rights", which sought a solution to idleness through confinement and enforced productive labour, must be seen as a solution conditioned, in part, by epistemological considerations

appropriate to an age in which capitalist relations of production had to coexist with feudal relations within the social formation. Whilst the control of idleness in the 17th and 18th centuries required a subjectivication in terms of a natural history of classification and manipulation of 'bodies', it did not define constitutive subjects. This is a configuration which shall be considered in the remaining chapters of this thesis, working within the concepts of capitalist relations of production and the Modern episteme.

Some commentators have argued somewhat vacuously that Foucault's use of Bentham's notion of panopticism is misguided simply because his plan was never adopted by the British government. But, as Dews notes, the Panopticon symbolised for Foucault the transformation in the modality of social control consequent upon industrial capitalism (1979: 151). The Panopticon represents the outer-limits of a new discursive formation: a science of welfare which is also a science of Man as the primary producer of wealth.

4. Summarising Discussion

The concept of relations of production and national economy require allied conceptions of labour and national workforce along with their political, legal, ideological (etc.) conditions of existence. A concept such as feudal relations of production does not determine the form of its conditions of existence nor their effectivity. These general concepts have been used as the basis for an analysis of discourses on wealth, labour, and the control and supervision of idleness and, in

particular, the epistemological conditions of formation of these discourses have been considered. Whilst it is argued that discourses on wealth and on labour and idleness provide certain of the conditions of existence of feudal relations in the determinate formation of the British national economy, the specificity and particular effectivity of these discourses have been emphasised. Such discourses are not to be relegated as merely determined by the logic of the 'mode of production' and they do not guarantee the reproduction of that economic system.

In examining the British national economy from the 16th century it has to be acknowledged with Hindess and Hirst that "The concept of the result can serve to specify, at most, what effects must have been produced if this given result is indeed to appear" (1975:287). But it has not been the intention here to produce a general theory of socio-economic development. Specific pieces of legislation and bodies of discourse have been used to illustrate the argument against such general theories.

Some attempt has been made to coincide Foucault's epistemei with feudal relations of production and the period of transition, in the British context, from feudal to capitalist relations. It has been suggested that the concept of the episteme can be used to problematise the epistemological conditions of formation of discourses within determinate relations of production. For example, the Mediaeval episteme casts knowledge as the reading of signs which identify the series of similarities by which the world is formed. That world is formed by God, Man's only task is to read through the sign. The world,

then, is unchangeable and to offend its God-given laws is to offend against Man and God. The Classical episteme, on the other hand, casts knowledge as the art of discrimination. Identities and differences are the signs by which Man orders the world. This contrast can be illustrated by considering the list of 23 different varieties of vagabond described by Thomas Harman in 1566 ⁽⁷⁷⁾ and the list of 2,300 men, women and children recorded in 1570 in a survey of the poor of Norwich (Pound, 1975:26, 100). Harman's list, prepared so "... that thereby the Justices and Sheriffs may in their circuits be more vigilant to punish these malefactors ..." (1871:iv), provides descriptions of the clothing, demeanour, practices and secret language of the various kinds of vagabonds, along with a list of names of approximately 150 members of this "unruly rabblement of rascals" (many of whom are to be recognised by their stigmata - "Harry Smith, he drivelleth when he speaketh"; "John Humfrey with the lame hand"; "John Stradling with the shaking head"; "John Crew with one arm"; "John Brown a great stammerer"; "Thomas Smith with the scalded skin"). The so-called Norwich census also provides names of the poor, their ages and occupations. Some two hundred years later, we find the central government attempting to produce accurate statistics about the poor rates, the number receiving relief and the workhouse accommodation. These returns, sought by Acts of Parliament in 1776 and again in 1786 (both Bills were introduced by Thomas Gilbert), were no longer attempting to cope with the world by assimilating the variety of its species of poor and idle into a comprehensive, yet infinite list: rather, they are attempts to arm the government with sufficient

77. See footnote 18 above.

and accurate information so that it might, as the preamble puts it, "... enable parliament to judge of proper remedies to redress ... grievances " (notably "the great and increasing expenses of maintaining and providing for the poor") (Nicholls, 1904:93). A further Act of 1786 sought details "of all charitable donations for the benefit of poor persons" (Nicholls, 1904:95). Whereas discourse on labour and idleness in the 16th century sought to police the workforce in terms of traditional and eternal categories, discourse in the 17th and 18th centuries categorised in order to police. Legislation, then, turned from brutal suppression towards an "economy of suspended rights".

In the Middle Ages, charity was the symbol of a Christian's love for fellow man and provided a source of relief for the poor which was given a level of guarantee by the churchwarden who policed the moral standing of parishioners and ensured that those who were able gave generously (Webb and Webb, 1927:7). Those sinners who wandered idly and dangerously around the countryside had a status whose inner nature had to be registered by surface signs: 'F' for falsehood; 'V' for vagabond. The policing of idleness is the art of distinguishing the legitimate traveller and the impotent from the idle beggar and the imposter. In the 16th century, this was the art of reading through the signs - "Thomas Smith with the scalded skin". Harman warned his readers of the many tricks practised by vagabonds to feign disability,

sickness, madness and ill-fortune. (78) By the 17th century, however, the policing of idleness adopts a different mode of subjectivation as an art of classification and discrimination. An "economy of suspended rights" identifies indolence in economic as well as political terms. Idleness is policed to turn marginal labour into wealth through enforced employment. As a natural history of control, legal rules enter into a process of signification which classify degrees of recidivism and register the power of the law.

Discourses on wealth and labour, which had overlapped within the Classical episteme, finally merge under the epistemological terms of the Modern episteme.

"All labour gives a result which, in one form or another, is applied to a further labour whose cost it defines; and this new labour participates in turn in the creation of a value, etc. This accumulation in series breaks for the first time with the reciprocal determinations that were the sole active factors in the Classical analysis of wealth. It introduces, by its very existence, the possibility of a continuous historical time ... 'wealth', instead of being distributed over a table and thereby constituting a system of equivalences, is organized and accumulated in a temporal sequence: all value is determined, not according to the instruments that permit its analysis, but according to the conditions of production ..." (Foucault, 1970:255-6).

78. A 16th/17th century ballad illustrates the common image of the artful vagabond:

"I am a lusty beggar,
And live by others giving;
I scorn to work,
But by the highway lurk,
And beg to get my living".

"The Cunning Northern Beggar", reprinted in Charles Hindley's The Old Book Collector's Miscellany, Vol.1 (Reeves and Turner, London, 1871).

As Foucault was later to observe, the close of the Classical age witnessed "the reversal of the political axis of individualisation" (1977:192). Under feudal relations "... individualisation is greatest where sovereignty is exercised and in the higher echelons of power" (ibid.). Thus, rogues and vagabonds were known through the signifying system of their practices and the marks branded upon their bodies. (79) Even in the Classical transition, individualisation of the idle was limited to the process of taxonomic classification according to a system of representations (identities and contrasts). It is the mark of a "disciplinary regime", Foucault maintains, that power is anonymous whilst those on whom it is exercised are specifically individualised (1977:192-3). But the individualisation of the Modern episteme is not simply a more subtle form of discrimination and classification: the epistemological conditions of existence of such discourse have changed. Man is not merely a body to be categorised and manipulated but rather a complex "empirico-transcendental doublet" (Foucault, 1970:322). A being with a history and a determinable future: an organism which may facilitate a finer technology of control but which also threatens an anarchy of self-development.

79. Those named by Harman, one might say, had attained a certain notoriety (Harrison estimated 10,000 beggars and vagabonds in 1577, Pound, 1975:27). It was this very possibility that those who practised "popular illegalities" could achieve fame and identity (individualisation) that contributed to the reform movement against harsh and spectacular punishments. Foucault argues in Discipline and Punish (and see Thompson, 1977:64).

The closing years of the 18th century bear witness, through discourse on poverty and idleness, to a conflation of discrimination and individualisation through the art of the examination. (80) In 1783, the Shrewsbury Local Act established guardians of the poor and a House of Industry with a farm, corn mill and woollen manufactory with the aim of furnishing "employment for the poor [to] compel them to earn their own support". Most importantly, however, the directors of the system believed, we are told, that "indiscriminate allowances and indiscriminate confinement to a Poor House are equally absurd and injurious ... We discriminate. This is the grand hinge upon which every plan of parochial reform ought to turn". One aspect of such discrimination was "the proper examination of each respective case before a weekly board of respectable Directors ..." (quotations from Isaac Wood's descriptions given in Webb and Webb, 1927:123-4). We should, however, note two things. First, such examination has specific legal as well as epistemological conditions of existence. Secondly, these conditions did not guarantee the effectivity of that process. In 1801, its enthusiastic promoter Isaac Wood died and support for the system died with him in Shrewsbury.

80. Foucault writes of "the examination":

"The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalising judgement . [...] It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them . [...] In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. [...] The superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance" (1977:184-5).

CHAPTER 5

Welfare, 'Discipline' and Capitalist Relations of
Production : Towards a Science of Welfare

1. Introduction

The Elizabethan Poor Law reflects a concern for the position of those "having no means to maintain them, and who use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by". In the same year as 43 Elizabeth I, cap.2 (1601) the Statute of Charitable Uses ⁽¹⁾ gave legal recognition to those charitable bequests made from philanthropic rather than purely religious motives. Such legislation illustrates the form and content, in a specific instance, of the legal conditions of what has been generally termed, in this thesis, welfare discourse. It has been argued that "... the creation of a 'labour force' always implied as a counterpart of the regulation of labour the regulation of idleness and poverty" (Cutler et al., 1978:250). The policing of idleness has legal, cultural, political, etc. conditions of existence. The Elizabethan Poor Law is an instance of legal conditions within the theoretical concept of the national economy of Britain and its feudal relations of production. Such legal conditions, and the epistemological conditions of their formation discussed in the previous chapter, have not been identified as signposts for the developing capitalist relations of the British Welfare State.

For those intent upon tracing the 'source' of the Welfare State there are countless clues to be found. In 1786, a Mr Acland proposed

1. 43 Elizabeth I, cap.4. Owen mentions the statute en passant (1965:70-1) and refers his readers to Jordan's Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660 (1959) for greater detail.

a scheme of national insurance which was to afford: a guaranteed income to those who were subsequently unable to work because of sickness; a child allowance; and an old age pension (Eden, 1928: 75-7). In similar vein, Thomas Paine suggested a graduated income tax which would make the poor laws obsolete and would provide family allowances, public education, maternity benefits, pensions, and funeral expenses (Thompson, 1977:101-2). Whilst not wishing to deny that welfare discourse registers concern for the plight of the 'less fortunate', within the terms of the concepts of social formation and relations of production emphasis is placed upon the relationship between welfare discourse and the policing of idleness. Concern for the 'less fortunate' has specifiable conditions of existence within determinate relations of production. It is only with the epistemological conditions which portray Man as both subject and object of knowledge that we find a science of welfare derived from the human sciences of Man and Society. It is within such a matrix of concepts that one must search for the 'birth' of social work discourse, for example. In this chapter, certain of the conditions of formation of a science of welfare within capitalist relations of production are to be discussed whilst Chapter 6 will illustrate the theoretical view, emphasised in this thesis, that such conditions cannot determine the trajectories of all discourses on welfare. In Chapter 7, those lines of continuity defining the discursive formation which we know as social work and which will be traced in this and the next chapter, will be taken up and examined for their relevance to a radical discourse which seeks a socialist reorganisation of the British

social formation and its relations of production.

In the previous chapter, that body of legislation which is the source of both liberal and radical historiography on the Welfare State, was examined within the terms of the concepts of national economy; feudal relations of production; and the transition from feudal to capitalist relations. It was suggested that discourse on wealth, labour and idleness provided certain of the conditions of existence of the relations of production within the British national economy, for example, by providing ideological, legal or theoretical legitimation of the 'effective separation' of direct producers from control of the means and conditions of production. In no sense, however, was it argued that such legislation guaranteed the reproduction of the relations of production or that 'the state' was the mere executive of the 'ruling class'. The state is neither monolithic nor omnipresent; it is a concept consisting of "... a complex of differentiated agencies of decision" (Hirst, 1980:66). Statutes have their own conditions of existence, amongst which might be numbered class struggle between economic agents and the balance of power within the legislative agency. (2)

In addition, statutes do not guarantee the rules of conduct they seek to define, regardless of the agencies and machinery of enforcement

2. Parliamentary 'representatives' cannot simply be treated as personifications of the interests of economic agents. Members of Parliament, democratically elected or not, must be seen as agents of decision with specific conditions of calculation. Although economic conditions will form an element of greater or lesser influence in such decisions, they cannot simply be treated as somehow isomorphic.

made available. (3)

The previous chapter sought to analyse the moment of transition of the British national economy from feudal to capitalist relations in terms of epistemological conditions of formation of discourse on wealth, labour and idleness. Differences in certain conditions, such as the requirement of a pool of labour to meet seasonal demands in the rural areas and the increasing demand for labour in the industrial centres coupled with the greater danger of crime and unrest from large accumulations of vagabonds and unemployed workers generally, can be seen to have been compatible with the epistemological conditions defined by the concept of the Classical episteme but to have resulted in different forms of control: a paternalistic 'moral economy' in the countryside (the 'allowance system') and an "economy of suspended rights" in the industrial centres (enforced labour; re-settlement of paupers). The present chapter seeks to coincide the concept of the Modern episteme and certain of the conditions of existence of discourse on welfare within capitalist relations of production in the British national economy. Lines of discursive continuity will be traced in the attempt to link discourse on welfare and idleness from the early 19th century with contemporary social work discourse.

3. Hirst notes that "... state apparatuses and practices are not reducible in their practices and effects to law or in their action to the limits of their own legal form. Public law constructs administration and state activity as a realm of differential agencies of decision, agencies that it purports to define and regulate. But it cannot subsume them, precisely because they must be assigned a definite autonomy of action in order that the state's activities be organized" (1980:68). Perhaps the most obvious example of the failure of legislation to guarantee enforcement, in the context of this thesis, is the apparent failure of the law to prevent vagabondage.

2. The Growth of the State

The exponential growth of the state in the 19th century, following centuries of relative insignificance, is a widely accepted phenomenon among historians. The more conservative historian sees such growth as ad hoc; the Whiggish see it as the triumph of the rational statemen and administrators of the day; the Marxist sees it, ambiguously, as both the tightening of the hold of capital over labour and as a response to 'working class' pressure for social change. Philip Corrigan is keen to emphasise the complexity of what he calls "state formation" but his various writings, in the final analysis, amount to a consideration of how the "ruling class" ("an alliance, a set of groups unified at a strategic level", 1980:41) has induced conformity through "moral regulation" (Corrigan, January 1977; Corrigan and Corrigan, 1979). (4) A phrase such as "state formation" does, in fact, suggest either an over-allegiance to voluntarism - the state is the result of the efforts of bourgeois reformers such as Bentham and Chadwick, or to an evolutionary historiography in which the state is shown to have been forming from some unidentified origin lost in history (Corrigan often begins with what he sees as a revolution in government in 1530).

4. Corrigan's PhD thesis provides an exhaustive review of works on the so-called 'revolution in government' and of Marx and Engels, Weber, and Spencer on the role of the state. Central to the thesis, however, is the study of four "state servants" - Horner, Kay, Tremenheere and Chadwick; there is also a chapter on the "Influence of T.H. Green on Liberal Reforms" and Appendix II is about S.T. Coleridge. In that sense it has its own flavour of 'Whiggishness': what we are given is much more biographical than illustrative.

Habermas provides a clearer statement of the classical Marxist view of the role of the state in what he terms a "liberal-capitalist" social formation (1976). Once the capitalist mode of production has been established, Habermas argues, "the exercise of the state's power ... can be limited" to: the protection of commerce through the machinery of justice; the avoidance of self-destructive side-effects (e.g. regulation of the hours of work); the satisfaction of the "prerequisites of production" (e.g. transport; communications); and the administration of the legal requirements of capitalism (e.g. tax law; banking) (1976:21). But it is surely perverse to describe such state functions as "limited". They can, in fact, cover the entire field of activity of the so-called interventionist state, including what Habermas later calls "market-replacing actions of the state" (1976:53). (5)

Habermas utilizes the standard Marxist thesis that under feudal relations the separation of the direct producers from the means of production and the distribution of the product is effected through a process of legitimation which is "other than economic". (6) (Habermas, 1976:19-20). As Cutler et al have suggested, "... the contrast Marx

5. By accepting the 'bourgeois' ideological view that the state in early capitalism was merely the watchman and the neutral arbiter, credibility is given to the conspiratorial view that every instance of state 'intervention' (the improvement of working conditions; to provide assistance to the sick, disabled and aged; to support 'lame-ducks' in industry) is really a counter-balancing of dysfunctions which must inevitably favour capital and the 'ruling class'.

6. The phrase comes from Capital, Vol.3, and see Cutler et al (1977: 245).

draws, which has been taken over by a majority of Marxist historians ... is seriously inadequate" (1977:245). Habermas wants to contrast the traditional "world-views and ideologies" which he sees legitimating the class structure of "traditional social formations" with the relative separation of the "economic system from the political" under capitalism (1976:21). In effect, Habermas endorses the view that legitimation of the class structure under capitalism is achieved through the institution of the market system which is "founded on the justice inherent in the exchange of equivalents" (ibid.:22). This enables Habermas to build his theory of potential legitimation crises on the tendency for "market-replacing actions of the state" to negate the separation of the economic and political systems in "advanced capitalism" (ibid.:33 et seq.). Habermas, however, is committed to an evolutionary view of social development.

There is nothing in the concept of feudal relations of production which requires the relationship between landlord and peasant to be one of total political domination. First and foremost the relationship is an economic one based upon the effective possession of, separation from, an integral means of production, land. Nor does this relationship have to be seen as one of simple exploitation. Landlords, in fact, can play essential roles in production both by using organisational skills and by utilizing capital for large-scale enterprises such as land irrigation (Cutler et al., 1977:248). Conversely, it should be apparent that the concept of capitalist relations of production cannot be defined essentially in terms of its

basis in economic equality (real or otherwise). Capitalist relations imply the effective possession by capitals of essential means of production (raw materials; machinery; factories; hotels) and the effective separation of workers from such commodities. Workers sell their labour as a commodity to capitals. This clearly implies a degree of state involvement in the legal definition and supervision of contracts between capitals and between capitals and labour, both at the moments of production and commodity distribution. We must take care, then, not to under-estimate the degree of direct involvement of the state in the definition of economic and social relationships within feudal relations and capitalist relations of production. A national economy requires an "instance of regulation" which has acknowledged authority to produce and enforce a body of public law.

Roberts has suggested that up to 1833, the central administration did little beyond "... administer justice, collect taxes, and defend the realm". Its influence on the individual was minimal, continues Roberts, showing "... little concern for his well-being. It failed even to supervise those local authorities and voluntary institutions that did concern themselves with the individual's welfare" (1969:13). The previous chapter sought to illustrate the many instances when state regulation through public law was very apparent and drew attention to the Commission created by Charles I to supervise the enforcement of those statutes which policed idleness. It is interesting to note that this Commission sought merely to enforce existing regulations by ensuring that those who neglected their duties were

punished as the law provided. This may, in part, explain the failure of the Commission. Although time and again statutes blamed those charged with the execution of such laws for their failure, the powers and duties of agents such as overseers were defined by these statutes. Justices of the peace were usually given general powers to supervise the administration of the Poor Laws and laws controlling vagabondage. But it must be remembered that in their own localities such magistrates were usually the most economically and politically influential residents. Local power was granted, but it was also expected. What must be considered, then, is not simply the degree of central supervision envisaged by those who sought it but the conditions under which it was being suggested.

3. The Modern Episteme

"... since Kant science has no longer been seriously comprehended by philosophy [...]
... the philosophy of science that has emerged ... as the heir of the theory of knowledge is methodology pursued with a scientistic self-understanding of the sciences. 'Scientism' means science's ... conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science" (Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, 1978:3-4).

"Modern thought, then, will contest even its own metaphysical impulses, and show that reflections upon life, labour, and language, in so far as they have value as analytics of finitude, express the end of metaphysics: the philosophy of life denounces metaphysics as a veil of illusion, that of labour denounces it as an alienated form of thought and an ideology, that of language as a cultural episode" (Foucault, The Order of Things, 1970:317).

Modern thought turned those series of signs which Classical discourse took as representations of identities and differences into superficial surface features. Knowledge no longer consisted of the art of taxonomic classification on the basis of shared characteristics (for example, the degree of recidivism of the vagabond) but required analysis of organic structures and internal relations. With the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries changes can be identified in the discourse on wealth, poverty, welfare and idleness. We can begin to see changes in that relationship which Foucault has called "power-knowledge relations".

The demand for a centralised control of the Poor Laws, which was an important feature of the 1834 Report of the Royal Commission, was clearly seen as the most efficient way of controlling 'undesirable' local deviations from the 'pure' intentions of the original Elizabethan legislation, particularly the 'pernicious' use of poor rates in aid of wages. Nassau Senior, an eminent member of the Royal Commission, was very open about the benefits of the Act of 1834 and its control of the 'excesses' of the magistrates. In a letter to George Villiers in 1835 he wrote:

"... our domestic revolution is going on in the most peaceful and prosperous way possible. The Poor Law Act is covering England and Wales with a network of small aristocracies, in which the guardians elected by owners and rate-payers are succeeding to the power and influence of the magistrates" (quoted by Lubenow, 1971:39).

In contrast to the Commission created by Charles I, the Royal Commission of 1832-4 utilized a quite different body of knowledge. The Royal

Commissioners did not obediently respond to the dominating views of any one 'class' or 'interest' and it can be argued that their emphasis upon central government control was seen as an unnecessary encroachment by 'capitalists', labourers and Tories alike (McCord, 1976:99). For Chadwick, the important features of the 'New Poor Law' were its bases in democracy ⁽⁷⁾ and empirical knowledge. ⁽⁸⁾ This power-knowledge relation, Chadwick felt, would "... be found to be the best protection of minorities, and the independent labourer's best safeguard against any tampering with the labour market" (1836:530-1). Throughout his article, Chadwick emphasised to his predominantly 'Whig' readership the empirical evidence gathered by the Commissioners which, he argued, refuted a number of existing "principal doctrines" (ibid.:491). Initially, the Commissioners had felt that the smaller the area of administration the greater the control over ascertaining and meeting particular and individual needs. In fact, enquiry had shown that proximity was no guarantor of an efficient examination. ⁽⁹⁾ Local

7. "The power of the Central Board", wrote Chadwick in 1836, "... is the power of the public at large, the power of an instructed democracy, as against all local oligarchies or petty and adverse interests". (From an article in the 'Whig' periodical - Edinburgh Review, reprinted in Coats, 1973:530 and cited hereafter as Chadwick, 1836).

8. Burton and Carlen write that "The concerns, of what is in many ways the Chadwickian era, are to institutionalise new and efficient state apparatuses notwithstanding the prevalence of the doctrine of economic laissez-faire. The apparatuses were to be founded upon empirical knowledge ..." (1979:4).

9. "But when instances are now of frequent occurrence where a pauper is found to have saved large sums of money, without the fact having been known or suspected by the members of the same family ... how should a neighbour, much less a parish officer, be expected to have a better knowledge ...?" (Report of the 1832 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, quoted by Chadwick, 1836:509).

discretion was, perhaps "unavoidable almost" in the "application of the rules to the hundreds of ever-varying cases of the paupers". Such discretion was, however, founded merely "on impressions derived from a few individual cases". A truer picture could only be gained "by extensive induction, or general rules derived from large classes of cases, which the annual officer has no means of observing" (Chadwick, 1836:529, 532). As Foucault writes in contrasting the form of Classical knowledge with that of the Modern age:

"Henceforth, the table, ceasing to be the ground of all possible orders, the matrix of all relations, the form in accordance with which all beings are distributed in their singular individuality, forms no more than a thin surface film of knowledge ... The visible order, with its permanent grid of distinctions, is now only a superficial glitter above an abyss" (Foucault, 1970:251).

Chadwick sought, through the social survey, to direct attention not simply at the characteristics of the individual pauper but towards the pauper class.⁽¹⁰⁾ Knowledge did not seek to identify characteristics in order to arrange a taxonomy, rather it analysed pauperdom as an organic whole with a density and structure which described a relationship between its elements and the functions they performed. Amongst those "principal doctrines" refuted by this form of knowledge, argued Chadwick, was the "aphorism" - 'poverty is the

10. "Now, admitting the general proposition or principle, that a man will seek that condition which is the most pleasurable to him; ... yet without staying to enquire how large a mass of facts are included under [this proposition] ..., we may ask how extensive an enquiry does it not require to determine what is the relative condition of a whole class of the people ..." (Chadwick, 1836:490).

mother of crime'. Not "want" but misconduct ("indolence, inattention or dissipation, or habitual drunkenness, or association with bad females"), was the cause of crime (1836:493). Similarly, bankruptcy was not the result of the vicissitudes of trade and the burden of taxation, but, rather, personal failing (reckless speculations; "neglected book-keeping"; trading beyond means; allowing expenses to far exceed expected profits) (ibid.:494). Even old age could no longer be taken as a competent representation of innocent need. As Chadwick makes clear, "helplessness" does not automatically signify "desert". Sympathy stands as "an obstacle to the ascertainment of truth". Aged inmates of workhouses, far from being "... the parents of meritorious and industrious labourers ..." were found to be "... the parents of the worst part of the population, of the felon, the prostitute, the poacher, or the smuggler ..." (ibid.:495). On the basis of this kind of evidence, Chadwick reminds his readers, the Commissioners were encouraged to find that most of the pauperism studied arose from "fraud, indolence, or improvidence". Eloquently, the Commissioners recorded that pauperism was not "an organic disease". Given the ease with which public assistance could be obtained, the Commissioners were surprised "at the number of those who have escaped the contagion". The diagnosis then: "the disease was ... not disease of structure, but disorder of the functions" (quoted by Chadwick, 1836:498).

The Royal Commission of 1832 marks the forceful arrival of the Modern episteme although, as already discussed, its effects can be seen in earlier discourse on poverty and idleness. It was clearly the

most exhaustive enquiry of its kind at that time. But the aim of thoroughness was not the Classical aim of finally completing the table of classification of pauperism and its relief, but the Modern aim of treating the Poor Laws as a system. The organ was found not to be suffering a terminal illness but merely to be in need of a strengthening tonic.

To refuse the explanatory structure of a conspiracy theory is not to deny the force of such 'conspiracies'. Empirical 'evidence' is easily found that certain sections of a social formation have feared other sections and plotted their subjugation or sought their exploitation. ⁽¹¹⁾ Political opponents of Whig reforms in the early 19th century had their own notions of the 'real' intentions hidden beneath such reforms. Cobbett and other radicals, Poynter tells us, criticised Rose's Savings Bank Act of 1817 as "... an artful device for getting the poor to pay off the national debt or an even more artful one for making them fundholders and thereby ensuring their allegiance

11. Clearly the kinds of theoretical, ideological or political bias apparent in discourses have a theoretical and political importance which should not be ignored. When the chairman of the CBI in Scotland is reported to have suggested that the inherent abilities of children ought to be identified so that greater emphasis could be placed upon "preparation for careers in industry", and that it should be made apparent to young people that it was not only socially desirable to go into industry but was "possibly the most patriotic career available" (Edinburgh Evening News, June 26, 1981), radicals ought not to allow the theoretical and political orientation of such a statement to stand in the way of recognising the very real problem which it tries to tackle. Decisions have to be made within a national economy about the allocation of tasks and this is as much of a problem given socialist relations of production as it is given so-called market-freedom under 'capitalism'. In fact, most 'conspiracies' are simply the calculations and decisions made by one agent with which others disagree. As Mishra says of Bismarck's social policy: "... the 'conspiracy' was all too evident. Bismarck's avowed aim was to crush revolutionary socialism ..." (1977: 72).

to the existing system" (1969:294). (12) Anxiety amongst the 'respectable classes' that political opponents at home and abroad might engender a revolution is easily understood. Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class is an immense catalogue of such anxieties and the political reactions they often induced, for example, the planting of government spies within 'dangerous' organisations or communities. The Corrigans tell us that the New Poor Law created a knowledge-power relation which facilitated the formation of "... a national data-gathering network via boards of guardians, their medical officers and relieving officers ..." (Corrigan and Corrigan, 1979:14). Confidential correspondence, maintain the Corrigans, was forwarded to London providing information about Chartist strengths, about wages, rents and prices (ibid.). No doubt justices had performed similar roles in earlier days. (13) The important point is less the fact that local state officials make useful if obvious 'spies'

12. The Savings Bank Acts (57 George III, cap.130; 58 George III, cap.48) did make provision for deposits to be lodged with the National Debt Office. Nicholls, writing in the early 1850s, felt that such accumulation by the "industrious class" must have given them "a large interest in the stability of our institutions, as well as affording evidence of a marked improvement in their habits and social position" (1904:194). Evidence of an emerging 'labour aristocracy' it may have been; the contribution to the National Debt fund was, however, minimal. The national debt in 1817 was £758,646,654 with an annual charge of £27,652,012 by 1833, total deposits in savings banks amounted to £14,334,393.

13. Foster (1974:181-3) provides an interesting account of the way in which a 'revolutionary' organisation - the Oldham United Englishmen - controlled the vestry at Oldham and thereby provided us with a welcome respite from stories of 'ruling class' hegemony. Through 'manipulation' of local shopkeepers who depended upon 'working class' patronage, control of the vestry and thereby control over constables and poor law officials was wrested from the 'ruling class'. Only with the 1839 County Constabulary Act and the new voting system introduced in the 1847 Poor Law was this 'working class' hegemony reversed.

than the modality of knowledge which is implied. In fact in 1806 Colquhoun had described in his Treatise on Indigence just such a system of national police. A Board of Commissioners should, he felt, be created to collect information which would be published by Parliament. Statistics on all paupers relieved would become available along with information on rents and rates; the wages and expenses of labourers; employment opportunities; schools; and "... in what degree and proportion ... the inferior classes are generally sober and industrious or the reverse" (quoted by Foynter, 1969:205).

Within the new modality of knowledge in the 19th century, labour takes on an added importance as the source of wealth. As a consequence, the policing of idleness must also take on a new and distinct relevance.

"... as labour is the source of wealth, so is poverty of labour. Banish poverty, you banish wealth ..."
(Chadwick, 1836:501).

Idleness, then, is not merely a problem of quantity (one unit of labour realises one unit of wealth) but of quality (the division of labour and its rational use augments the production of wealth). The particular combination of conditions within capitalist relations of production which, conceptually speaking, requires the effective separation of labour from the means and conditions of production, the technical division of labour and the wage-form, clearly requires legal, cultural and ideological endorsement of the dependent position of labour within the social division of labour. The wage-form underlines labour as a commodity sold to capital and thereafter controlled by capital. The

technical division of labour strengthens the social division between possessor and non-possessor of the means of production. Each labourer as economic agent is dependent upon capital to bring together a work force which can work as a unit or enterprise (labour having no other means of production) but, in addition, enterprises are also separated. In that sense, labour experiences a double separation (Cutler et al., 1977:49). (14) Whilst such conditions are sustained legally, politically and culturally, they do not dictate the form or the effectivity of such legal and cultural institutions.

David Owen has suggested that despite a high level of philanthropic activity, early British industrial society produced "no memorable theory of charity" (1965:104). As has been suggested, however, to appreciate discourse on welfare in the British 19th century context, it is necessary to understand the epistemological conditions of that discourse as well as the economic, political and legal conditions of British capitalist relations of production.

4. Welfare Discourse and 'Panoptic Discipline'

"Let us follow the categories which Foucault draws out ... These are the elements of discipline ... But at the same time they are the elements of the capitalist organization of labour and the pattern they follow is that of the production of variable capital, of the worker. Their object is the production of the individual as a ... part of the complex capitalist machine" (Melossi, 1979:92).

14. It is worth re-emphasising that this is not a discussion about collectivities of personalities, one of which is destined by the nature of 'capitalism' to exploit the other. What are being outlined are the basic economic concepts which form the concept of a determinate form of relations of production.

"It follows from Marx's analysis that 'co-operation is a necessary concomitant of all production on a large scale', and that the form it takes under capital's rule, the form that Foucault calls 'disciplinary power', is a feature not of co-operation itself ... but of the antagonisms of capitalist production" (Fine, 1979b:90).

"Foucault does not derive the forms of government entailed in the 'microphysics of power' or the strategies these powers embody from a prior social origin. They are not an emanation of capitalism. Nor is there a single social support behind the disciplinary 'eye', an interest or agent whose servant these powers and strategies are. They are specific constructions in discourse and entail discrete techniques and practices. The 'solutions' to problems of social organization are neither given nor homogeneous" (Hirst, 1980:91).

The first two quotations above illustrate the standard utilization of Foucault's concept of 'discipline' by Marxist theorists. Whilst "the categories which Foucault draws out" will be used in this chapter to analyse welfare discourse, it is Hirst's injunction to respect the specificity of that discourse which will be followed. Both Melossi and Lea (1979), his translator, underestimate their dependence on Foucault's portrayal of 'discipline' as omnipotent by overemphasising panopticism as architectonic in the architectural sense and underemphasising its systematisation of knowledge. Both Melossi (1979:95) and Lea (1979:87) allow 'discipline' to hegemonise social relations and incorporate the 'working class'. Whilst Fine (1979b) delivers a strong critique of Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, in a later essay (1980) he utilizes Bentham's Panopticon in precisely the terms of Foucault's Discipline and Punish. Despite his claim that the lesson to be drawn "is one quite opposed" to Foucault's, we

find Fine describing the contemporary prison as an expression of "bourgeois-democratic power" (1980:25), whose "form is directly determined by the capitalist mode of production" (ibid.:26). In line with his interest in Pashukanis, Fine gives his reader the final reduction: "Bourgeois punishment is predicated on the abstraction of a legal subject [which] ... is a direct reflection of the abstracted individual of commodity production ..." (ibid.).

An author does not have sovereign possession of his works and it is this aleatory aspect of discourse which serves to make a nonsense of idealism. It is nevertheless ironic that Foucault's Discipline and Punish may have served to reawaken the old controversies surrounding the influence of Bentham. In arguing against the idealist view that it was Bentham and his ideas which were responsible for humanising English criminal law in the 19th century, Rustigan substitutes its group equivalent: reform was, in fact, "prompted essentially by middle-class demands for effective crime control legislation" (1980:205). Bentham's panopticism is the quintessential representation of the utilitarian calculus. Foucault, unfortunately, sees it as "an indefinitely generalizable mechanism" (1977:215) which characterises "the disciplinary society". Foucault effectively ignores his own injunction - "Seek in the discourse not its laws of construction ... but its conditions of existence" (1978:15). As Hirst and his colleagues never tire of telling us, for Marx a process was a "synthesis of many determinations"; Foucault examines one of these lines of determination but allows it to colonise all the conditions of existence.

(i) The Panopticon Poor Plan

"The Panopticon Penitentiary may have been the project closest to Bentham's heart, but the Panopticon Poor Plan was the more elaborate and the more original" (Poynter, 1969:109).

Bentham's writings on poor law management date from the mid-1790s. The Panopticon "industry houses" represent Bentham's application of panopticism to the issue of welfare and idleness. (15) Pauper management, Bentham planned, would be under the control of a joint-stock company, the National Charity Company. The management of pauperism, then, was to be a capitalistic enterprise. Capital would be raised through the sale of shares, along with a government subsidy equivalent to the poor rates currently levied. Bentham's plan was that initially half-a-million people would be accommodated in 250 'houses' (16) and that each 'house' would be under the complete control of a governor. Profit was to be the primary motivating force ensuring that governors performed their duties, although the 'cash nexus' operated also to ensure certain other matters (a regular sum of money would be received by the 'house' for every year of a child's life, whilst money would be forfeited for every woman who died in childbirth). Poynter has suggested that Bentham was uncertain of the

15. Himmelfarb (1970) provides a great deal of detail about the industry houses and Bentham's notion of a National Charity Company and there is an interesting discussion in Poynter (1969:117-44).

16. Bentham estimated that after 21 years a million persons would be held in 500 houses (Himmelfarb, 1970:83).

ability of a government department to run such a scheme (1969:131) and Himmelfarb quotes Bentham to the effect that whilst the government might be in a position to run his scheme in 50 years time, joint-stock management was clearly superior having improved and learned from its earlier errors (1970:84).

Evidently, for Bentham, the only way to solve the problems of idleness (the burden of poor rates; the dangers from wandering vagabonds; the wasted labour) was to ensure that anyone who could not earn a subsistence entered an industry house. (17) The arena of knowledge in the 19th century was occupied by organic structures whose elements were linked through analogy and succession. Bentham utilized analogy in his determination of who should occupy his industry houses. (18) If the pauper who applied for relief had to enter a 'house' then, analogously, those who were paupers yet did not ask for public assistance should also be forced to enter. Governors, then, were to apprehend those who were able-bodied (could work) and who appeared to be propertyless yet did not seem to have "honest and sufficient means of livelihood" (employment) (quoted by Himmelfarb,

17. At the turn of the century, critics of the Poor Laws felt that the intentions of the Elizabethan statutes had been perverted by giving relief to those who were in a position to earn their own subsistence (able-bodied). Bentham drew a distinction between the state of poverty (which was the normal state for those who had to sell their labour for subsistence) and indigence (the inability to maintain oneself through labour). The distinction was one later promulgated by a collaborator of Bentham's, Patrick Colquhoun, and by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1832.

18. Himmelfarb refers to the process as "the logic of extension - if one, why not another?" (1970:91-2).

1970:88). Clearly, those found begging were to be sent to a 'house' but, by analogy, those who were "depredators" must also be forced to enter. A depredator could be recognised from the fact that he did not work yet did not beg. For Bentham, the fact that he may have been "a smuggler, a sharper, a coiner, a thief, a highwayman, or an incendiary" was of little theoretical consequence, the basis of the analogy being lack of employment. On the same grounds, those who had once been depredators or had been acquitted of such a charge, were to be sent to an industry house. As Himmelfarb notes, paraphrasing Bentham, "the genuinely reformed man or the genuinely innocent one would not be wanting for legitimate employment" (1970:90). What Bentham's scheme does is to endorse the analogue - propertylessness/labour, and provides coercive powers to maintain this fundamental relationship of capitalist relations of production. But what concerns Bentham is a knowledge-power relation which does not seek for taxonomic classification of the idle but rather seeks to ensure the efficient functioning of a system. For Bentham, indigence could only be turned to profit on the basis that no loophole existed for the propertyless to gain subsistence without labour.

But if Bentham adopted a principle of coercion through analogy he also sought to manipulate through succession. Discussing the emergence of the social sciences, Foucault (1970:357) identifies a set of constituent models, borrowed from biology, economics and philology, which structure the social sciences. These models can be seen in operation in Bentham's work. From biology: Man has a set of functions. The utilitarian calculus suggests that Man seeks

pleasure and avoids pain and this was the basis of Bentham's plans. In seeking to balance his functions, Man adopts norms of behaviour. To satisfy the bodily functions of subsistence most men are prepared to sell their labour. Where that norm is artificially disturbed (through charity; poor relief etc.) it has to be artificially repaired (coercion through analogy). From economics: Man has needs and desires and their satisfaction leads to conflict. In seeking to resolve conflict, Man establishes rules. Foucault notes that although the social sciences interact, in general, psychology is fundamentally the study of Man in terms of functions and norms, whilst sociology is the study of Man in terms of conflict and rules (1970:357-8). Whilst Bentham adopted a psychology to explain motivation, much of his pauper plan is informed by a sociology and by an orientation towards what Foucault calls the "analytic of finitude" (ibid.:312 et seq.). For Bentham, human needs and desires were, to a large extent, socially determined. Diet, he recognised, was governed by custom. In the industry houses, inmates would receive no meat, and bread would be replaced by cheaper substitutes. In addition, experiments would be conducted to ascertain the minimum quantity and quality of food consonant with good health (Himmelfarb, 1970:95). (19)

To interfere with desires would, of course, produce conflict and coercive powers would be required as well as the discipline implicit

19. Recognising the interaction between desires and functions Bentham intended that provision be made for "old-stagers", transferred from the existing poorhouses, to receive slightly better meals on the basis that their bodily systems would find the new régime's meals too rigorous. This, Bentham called the "habit-respecting principle" (Himmelfarb, 1970: 94-5, footnote).

in the very concept of panopticism. But Bentham was adamant that what he proposed was not a form of punishment but rather a finely tuned balance between general and particular needs (again, the utilitarian calculus). "Subjection, subjection not liberty, be it remembered, is the natural state of man", wrote Bentham. (20) But these are not the words of the political dictator but of the social scientist. For Bentham, Man as the object of knowledge, was knowable in his limitations, his finitude. Man already and always must suffer subjection: of a body imposed by evolution (with organic functions that must be met); of desires, which he must toil to satisfy; of a language that imposes an historically determined mode of thought (Foucault, 1970:312-4). Bentham viewed his pauper plan as a necessary "measure of simple precaution and security, (21) operating indirectly to the benefit of him who is the subject of it, taken for the benefit of the community at large" (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:94).

Bentham used psychological notions to establish coercion through analogy. Those who were to enter his industry houses were in need of "wardship" every bit as much as children and the insane because:

20. "Every child during his period of weakness, every man for the first 16 or 18 years of his life, is a slave. Every family is by nature an absolute monarchy" (Bentham, quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:107).

21. "As security is increased, liberty is diminished" (Bentham, quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:93).

"The persons in question are a sort of forward children - a set of persons not altogether sound in mind - not altogether possessed of that moral sanity without which a man can not in justice to himself any more than to the community be intrusted with the uncontrolled management of his own conduct and affairs" (Bentham, quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:94).

But Bentham's coercion was merely preparatory to manipulation through succession. The historicism which the Modern episteme witnessed dictated, in the realm of desires, the search for origins: but it also suggested that the future must be searched for gratification of desires. The sociology of desires suggested, to Bentham, the requirement of coercion where norms were abused. But the future could and should be manipulated. "It is", wrote Bentham, "by diminishing wants not by multiplying them that the capacity of population is increased. Of increasing wants there is no end" (Himmelfarb, 1970:113, footnote). Bentham's plan for the manipulation of desire depended upon exploitation of the fact that it was culturally determined. The major source of the increase in inmates over time ⁽²²⁾ was to be pauper children, both those taken in and those born in the industry houses. 'Education' was to comprise "the whole of the individual's time". Children were, in effect, to be conditioned to specific diets, emotions and labour. Rights were no longer to be suspended, they were to be replaced by desires designed to suit the lot of the pauper. Knowing no better, pauper apprentices would believe they were in paradise. "In withholding

22. See footnote 16 above.

the means of gratification there can be no hardship where there is no desire" (ibid.).

Bentham's panoptic poor plan confronts Man not merely as a living being but as a new object of knowledge. Bentham's discourse occupies that space in the Modern episteme which we care to call the social sciences and, as such, it is concerned with Man as an element within a wider system - society. Conflict between these elements was avoided through recognition of the rules of the utilitarian calculus. For "the refuse" of the social stock, however, it was necessary to devise a system of rules which would avoid conflict whilst maximising the marginal labour of "the national stock of industry and ability" (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:98). "Charity is the end, economy but the means" argued Bentham (Poynter, 1969:138); nevertheless, nothing was to be allowed which did not contribute to the production of profit in the houses of industry. For those radical theorists who must see in every act of philanthropy and in every piece of social legislation its potential for increasing or for maintaining profits, Bentham's pauper plan provides every justification. And yet we learn that his early works aroused little interest (Rustigan, 1980:206; Himmelfarb, 1970: 119) and that his panopticism was officially rejected by Parliament in 1811 (Annette, 1979:74). Bentham's work, rather, serves to define the outer limit of discourse on idleness and welfare in the Modern episteme. Though it represents his own thinking about capitalist relations of production it cannot be said to typify such discourse. Capital was to be raised through the sale of shares and the direct producers in the industry houses were to have no effective control over

production or distribution. Bentham's plan could be seen by theorists to be non-functional to capital in two respects. First, the labour used could not be said to have been freely sold and, secondly, the pauper scheme would effectively remove the industrial reserve army.

As already discussed in Chapter 3, eternal laws of 'capitalism' must be rejected. Bentham's pauper plan was not automatically negated because it offended laws of 'capitalist' development. Although Bentham played down the involvement of able-bodied labour in his plan (Himmelfarb, 1970:97), not all of the available labour was forced-labour. The plan required that "dross [be] converted into sterling" (ibid.:98) but much of this dross was what Bentham called "coming-and-going stock". That Bentham also envisaged a large and increasing supply of "longer staying" and "permanent" stock is, however, of some importance. The Settlement Act, as discussed in the previous chapter, provided a legal framework within which the demand for labour mobility could respect personal and national security. It is likely that Bentham's plan drew little support because it sought the solution to the problems of idleness in a realm which was rapidly becoming discredited - the house of industry. Empirically, the evidence suggested that in the long term pauper labour was unprofitable. Theoretically, the plan interfered too extensively in the circulation of labour and in the commodity consumption market. At a time of high demand from cotton manufactories for pauper child-labour (Webb and Webb, 1927:201-6), Bentham's plan required that all pauper children be apprenticed in the industry house until aged 21.

In 1812, Bentham's Pauper Management Improved was reprinted.

Bentham was of the opinion that four was the minimum age at which child-labour could be made profitable. By 1816, however, 56 George III, cap.139 set the minimum age at which a child could be apprenticed at nine years and the Factory Act of 1819 placed restrictions on the employment of those under 16 in cotton mills. (23) Bentham's plan to interfere in the freedom of the labour market does not offend a universal law of 'capitalist' production, legal contracts often bind employees to capitals for lengthy periods. It may, however, have influenced the specific effectivity of his general plan for pauper management. In addition, the plan would have set aside the wage-form as the mechanism for the production and reproduction of labour within the industry houses, an effect with implications for the commodity market more generally.

The previous chapter identified the legal and economic conditions for the maintenance of a pool of reserve labour through the 'allowance system'. Bentham's plan would not have abused the so-called law of capital accumulation and the mystery of the industrial reserve army. By demanding a privileged control over marginal labour the plan would, however, have interfered with the supply and the price of labour. As Poynter argues, the plan "... did not meet in detail the objections to all make-work schemes, that they would compete with free

23. As Marx noted, such legislation was very much "a dead letter" without the requisite machinery to ensure that it was adhered to (1977:264). The concern here, however, is to consider the impact of Bentham's plan at a time when concern was being expressed about child-labour.

labour ..." (1969:135). Poynter would seem to be of the opinion that to the extent that the industry houses were self-sufficient economies, they would not have interfered in the national economy generally (ibid.). On the contrary, however, it was their level of autonomy from the wider system which made them such a threat to the free market. Bentham's interference in the utilitarian calculus abused the very principles on which his plan was based. Nevertheless, an interesting consideration is raised. The deeper Bentham became involved with the conditioning of desires and the control of conflict the more his "... scheme for relief began to take on the aspect of a blue-print for a new society" (Poynter, 1969:135). By attempting to legislate the terms on which the freedom of utilitarianism might operate, Bentham flew in the face of a body of discourse which was being popularised by Malthus - the relationship between population, wages and subsistence.

In 1798, in his Essay on the Principle of Population, Malthus provided the theoretical and empirical confirmation of the belief that poverty was the inevitable condition of the mass of the population. Population, he maintained increased geometrically, whereas production increased arithmetically (Poynter, 1969:145). Anything which served to artificially maintain those who were destitute (poor relief; charity) would merely have the effect of exacerbating the situation: population would be increased without any corresponding increase in production. Population increases were controlled, Malthus maintained, by 'positive checks' (mortality due to poor diet etc.) and 'preventive checks' (restraint from marriage and procreation). Inevitably,

Malthus' ideas became popular amongst those who wished to abolish all forms of public welfare. Like many another of his time, Malthus began his analysis from a position of supposed equilibrium between production and population, with wages at subsistence level. Any increase in incomes (wages; poor relief) would encourage an increase in population which could not be immediately met by an increase in production (Poynter, 1969:152). As a consequence, Malthus not only opposed the Poor Law but was suspicious of any suggestion that the economy of the nation should be expanded. (24)

Bentham, on the other hand, felt he had devised a system "Which dreads no longer the multiplication of man" (Himmelfarb, 1970:111). The only limit to the expansion of the population, Bentham felt, was the limit implied by the available land and its produce. In seeking to manipulate desire, however, Bentham moved beyond the political economy of someone such as Ricardo, (25) contributing to that new

24. Marx suggested that Malthus' theories were "... greeted with jubilation by the English oligarchy as the great destroyer of all hankerings after human development" (1977:578, footnote). Malthus was an undoubted champion of the 'landed interest', the only economic expansion he could tolerate being agricultural. We do well to recall that the early 19th century saw continuing economic and political power for those with investments in land. It is interesting to see that the Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws (1817), which was notably 'Malthusian', could suggest that parish farms might prove a successful substitute for 'allowances'.

25. Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy (1817) reveals Benthamite influence. The cost of labour was, in part, dependent upon "the habits and customs of the people", noted Ricardo (Poynter, 1969:242). Ricardo however, had no suggestions to make to resolve the problems of the Poor Laws. Against Malthus, he advocated industrial expansion and saw labour as playing a major role through the production and consumption of luxury goods (ibid.). Ultimately, believed Ricardo, the economy would reach a point of complete equilibrium beyond which production could not increase; prices, profits and wages and population would stand still. As Foucault puts it, History is immobilised (1970:259).

discursive regularity - the social sciences. Considered as a blueprint for the national economy and not simply for industry houses, Bentham's panopticism can be seen as one solution to the problem of how to augment production through increased labour productivity without increasing the costs of labour. It is this interpretation which appeals to a number of radical theorists but it is one which owes little to the concept of capitalist relations of production.

In his discussion of the development of 'capitalism', Lea tangentially suggests that the 'modes of existence' of 'discipline' outlined by Foucault are actually those requirements of co-ordination which are "necessary in any complex organization requiring collective activities" (1979:81). This important observation seems, however, to have little consequence for Lea's later discussion which limits analysis to 'capitalist' organisation. Much of Foucault's popularity with radical theorists arises from the way in which the concept of 'discipline' appears to cope with what Marxists see as the paradox of 'capitalist' class rule which is both democratic and coercive. (26)

Lea argues that it is no longer the coercive control exercised by the factory which maintains the subordination of labour but the "monetization" of class struggle, that is, wage bargaining (1979:86-7). This compromise between capital and labour nevertheless establishes the

26. One aspect of the interest amongst Marxist theorists in things superstructural (the state; the law) is the renewed interest in Gramsci who drew a distinction between 'dominio' and 'egemonia' in his writings on class rule (Williams, 1960). Whereas 'dominio' was associated with force and coercion, 'hegemony' implied persuasion and consent.

hegemony of capital. Lea rejects Foucault's 'physics of power' (27) because it refuses "... location in distinct institutions or particular structures of social relations" (1979:89). Instead, he appears to opt for a view of class hegemony, in Gramsci's terms, as power obtained through persuasion and negotiation. In which event, it is worth noting the following passage from Gramsci's Prison

Notebooks:

"Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed ... But there is also no doubt that such ... a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic ..." (1978:161. Emphasis added).

Despite leaning heavily upon Foucault, Lea nevertheless decides to trade the uncertainty of the anonymous 'discipline' for the security of Marxist economism. Lea refuses the opportunities opened up by his own discourse: why does Foucault interpret 'discipline' as a coercive force? Despite his plea that 'power' be seen in positive rather than negative terms (1977:194), Foucault emphasises that 'discipline' is "a mechanism that coerces by means of observation" (ibid.:170). Why does Foucault treat 'discipline' as "a homogeneous, continuous power" (ibid.:173) and a "multiple, automatic and anonymous power" (ibid.:175)? Bentham combined a belief in the socio-historical basis of human

27. Well, almost. Whilst casting "monetization" as the "new relationship" between capital and labour, Lea nevertheless notes: "At the same time the perfection of the techniques of mass surveillance of the working population gathers pace ..." (1979:87).

desires with an ambition to both improve the lot of the pauper (28) and make pauper labour-power profitable. He questioned a History which could allow the pauper in a poorhouse to be fed on meat and, in seeking "... towards that ever-to-be-accomplished unveiling of the Same" (Foucault, 1970:340), towards his "Utopia", (29) Bentham questioned the Other: why, given the basic principle of self-interest, did some become indigent? He found his answer in the pathological development of "persons not altogether sound in mind". What he did not do was question the historical basis of those desires which he accepted as the norm.

"With the driest naïveté he takes the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man. Whatever is useful to this queer normal man, and to his world, is absolutely useful" (Marx, endorsing a description of Bentham as "a genius in the way of bourgeois stupidity", 1977:571, footnote).

Whilst, then, one might want to characterise that particular relation of knowledge and power embodied in Bentham's panopticism as a coercive force, its homogeneity and ubiquity resides merely in the

28. Bentham's embarrassment about the severity of his attitudes towards the profitability of the indigent is well illustrated by Himmelfarb (1970:especially pp.122-5) and yet he seemed to delight in seeing his ultimate aim as being entirely philanthropic. Poynter writes: "Harsh and repellant though much of Bentham's plan must always appear, the sincere exultation with which he wrote the section on Pauper Comforts is undeniable ..." (1969:138). Of himself Bentham wrote: "J.B. the most philanthropic of the philanthropic: philanthropy the end and instrument of his ambition" (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:125).

29. Bentham described his pauper plan as "Utopian", as a romance which was nevertheless realisable (Himmelfarb, 1970:113).

epistemological framework (as social science) and in the mind of its creator, Bentham. It does not reside in the 'needs' of 'capitalism' which 'call it into being'. Juxtaposed with the esoteric tone of much that Foucault writes, his linking of 'discipline' and 'capitalism' is hackneyed: "The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power ..." (1977:221). Common epistemological conditions of existence do not guarantee homogeneity to discourses, whether in terms of some conception of an identity of purpose or a unified effectivity. This chapter examines the epistemological conditions of formation of discourses on indolence and welfare in the 19th century and their relevance for an understanding of the conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production. Homogeneity and effectivity are issues to be resolved through the examination of the specificity of determinate discursive formations and not by theoretical fiat.

(ii) Labour Discipline: The Owenite Alternative

"In the first instance, discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault, 1977:141).

The attempts made in the Classical age to police idleness through confinement and forced labour were discussed in the previous chapter. By 1796, however, legislation acknowledged the failure of this "economy of suspended rights" by allowing payments of poor relief to be made to those not confined in 'poor houses'. Marxist theorists, however, have sought to apply the general concept of 'discipline' to the factory. Lea has made some interesting qualifications in this context.

First, he notes that in the early phases of 'capitalism', capital could exploit labour to the full by keeping wages down, hours long and, as a consequence, workers spent a great deal of time within the factory. Adding to this the existence of 'company towns', it could be suggested that workers were subject to what Foucault calls "enclosure". However, Lea suggests, 'capitalists' would be unlikely to want to bear the cost of policing their workforce once outside the factory. Secondly, the amount of autonomy which the worker had within the factory provided a degree of opportunity for industrial sabotage, Lea argues (1979:83-4). Now, whilst not wishing to overlook the inhumane exploitation of labour by many 'capitalist' enterprises in the 19th century one must, conceptually, see wage-rates, hours worked and working conditions in terms of their conditions of existence. [Factories, in a competitive market, (30) for example, had to attract labour and keep it. (31)] Such a condition would apply, to a modified degree perhaps, to the 'company town'. The mill built by David Dale in New Lanark was worked, to a large extent, by labour

30. In Manchester, for example, in 1800, there were some 50 spinning mills (Harrison, 1969:152).

31. Marx illustrated this point well in a footnote in Capital when he noted that in 1863 a number of firms petitioned for legislation to restrict the working hours of children. Such firms found it impossible to operate such restrictions voluntarily because their competitors who did not follow this example would gain an advantage (1977:257).

attracted from the Highlands of Scotland. (32) Once in New Lanark, of course, workers were less free to move to alternative employment because of its relative geographical isolation. Much later, Dale's successor, Robert Owen was to confess that "The people were slaves at my mercy; liable at any time to be dismissed ..." (quoted by Harrison, 1969:158, footnote).

Owen, of course, appears as a prominent milestone in many histories: British socialism; educational enlightenment; capitalist paternalism; personnel management; and the trade union movement, for example. Though he gained fame for his philanthropic management of the mills at New Lanark, that fame resided firmly in the economic success that his methods had apparently achieved. There are, in fact, interesting parallels between Owen's discourse on the economy of philanthropy and Bentham's Utopian pauper management. (33) Owen's own account of his early days at New Lanark show him attempting "to make the old superintendents of the different departments my agents" (1967:57). According to Owen, Dale's workers were "idle, intemperate,

32. According to Robert Owen's account of the mill "... it was then most difficult to induce any sober well-doing family to leave home to go into cotton mills ..." (1967:58). Dale specifically advertised for labour from the Western Highlands and offered as attractions "a house at a moderate rent, and the women and children provided with work" (Harrison, 1969:52). Dale did, however, also use the more exploitable labour of pauper children on a large scale.

33. The visitor to Owen's community in New Lanark, which is being renovated by the New Lanark Conservation and Civic Trust, can still see the Counting House built by Owen with its rounded side elevation. "From this office the whole village could be surveyed ..." says the Trust's booklet on the village (New Lanark Heritage Trail). A veritable Panopticon of village discipline.

dishonest, devoid of truth, and pretenders to religion". Owen established a more rigid system of controls over stock and equipment "to render theft impracticable" (ibid.:80). But, as he estimated, the most efficient "check upon inferior conduct" was the 'silent monitor', a system by which daily behaviour was graded, by colours and in public display, into bad, indifferent, good, and excellent (ibid.:80-1). The daily grade of each worker (when Owen took over the mill there were 1,300 people in the village and over 400 pauper children) was recorded in a register by the superintendent of each department. Greatly averse to punishment, Owen devised the silent monitor or telegraph "to render punishment unnecessary" (ibid.:136). Owen, in fact, daily inspected his workshops, and the monitors. (34)

"No cessation of inspection, no transgression, no transgression, no punishment" (Bentham, quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:109).

For Foucault, discipline distributes individuals in order to "... transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities" (1977:148). Such a formula clearly can be applied both to Bentham's pauper plan and Owen's industrial establishment. Linked with the "art of distributions" is the "control of activity" (Foucault, 1977:149). (900)

34. "... the workers observed me always to look at these telegraphs", he writes in his autobiography, "- and when black I merely looked at the person and then at the colour, - but never said a word ..." (1967:137).

In an Address "To the Superintendents of Manufactories and to Those Individuals Generally, Who, by Giving Employment to an Aggregated Population, May Easily Adopt the Means to Form the Sentiments and Manners of Such a Population", Owen outlined, in 1813, the approach he had adopted at New Lanark. His description conforms both to those epistemological conditions which have been described as the Modern episteme, and particularly that discursive configuration - the social sciences, and to Foucault's disciplinary control of activity. Foucault notes that the control of activity is elaborated as the productive use of time, (35) gesture and articulation between body and object (1977:149-56). Owen encapsulates this elaboration.

"... from the commencement of my management I viewed the population, with the mechanism and every other part of the establishment, as a system composed of many parts, and which it was my duty and interest so to combine, as that every hand, as well as every spring, lever, and wheel, should effectually co-operate to produce the greatest pecuniary gain to the proprietors" (1967:260. Emphasis added.)

Owen then proceeds to remind his manufacturing audience of the obvious benefits to be gained from maintaining machinery in good working order and asks "... what may not be expected if you devote equal attention to your vital machines, which are far more wonderfully constructed?" (ibid.). It would, however, be an injustice to the subtlety of Owen's

35. Bentham wrote that "no portion of time ought to be directed exclusively to the single purpose of comfort". Exercise was best when "infused into the mass of occupation". And, in discussing sleep, recommended "the least that can be made sufficient for health and strength"; (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:104).

persuasive skills to simply treat this Address as representing the ultimate in the alienation of human labour. Owen is working in the realm of analogy rather than homology. The Address prefaced Owen's "Third Essay On The Formation of Character" which, together with three others, would comprise his A New View of Society. We must consider the conditions of existence of Owen's discourse and his work at New Lanark. The enterprise at New Lanark was based upon capitalist relations of production. Owen was not 'the capitalist'. The capital in question, as the economic agency of decision and calculation, was a partnership of capitalists of whom Owen was one partner. Following opposition from his partners to plans for further developments at the mills Owen bought his partners' share of the establishment and, in 1809, began a new five-man partnership. Under the new partnership Owen started building his "schools for the formation of character" (1967:87) but again met with opposition from partners. "They ... said they were cotton spinners and commercial men carrying on business for profit, and had nothing to do with educating children; nobody did it in manufactories ..." (ibid.). It was at this time that Owen wrote and circulated his pamphlet outlining the work he had done at New Lanark (1813) and he thereby obtained yet another set of partners (ibid.:89). Under the new partnership (four Quakers, an Anglican and Jeremy Bentham) Owen was again able to proceed with his experimental work until he left New Lanark in 1824.

Owen's Address was, then, directed towards a less than amenable audience. As mentioned earlier, Lea makes the point that those responsible for the direction and control of capital were not

sympathetic to the suggestion that capital be invested in the policing of their workforces. Owen, in effect, was telling his audience that humanity demanded better treatment of workers; the fact that such improvements would also augment profits meant that there was absolutely no excuse for neglecting them. (36)

Nevertheless, Owen was running an industrial establishment which required supervision of the workforce. "It was life in a factory colony which the Quaker visitor, James Smith of Liverpool, described in 1820" writes Harrison (1969:155). The form of discipline imposed by Owen - to avert theft, to maintain good time-keeping and to promote efficiency - should not be seen in any sense as essentially capitalist. Capitalist relations of production did, however, imply that the labour force had no effective control over the means of production. Owen was aware of this and it could be said that it was a contributory factor in his realisation that New Lanark could not provide the environmental conditions for his 'new moral world'. Harrison reminds us, in fact, that Owen was later to maintain that it had been his intention to transfer the mills at New Lanark to the workforce before he left but that his partners would not agree (1969:158, footnote).

36. "... let us not perpetuate the really unnecessary evils which our present practices inflict on this proportion of our fellow-subjects. Should your pecuniary interests somewhat suffer by adopting the line of conduct now urged, many of you are so wealthy that the expense ... would not be felt. But when you may have ocular demonstration that, instead of ... loss, a well-directed attention to form the character and increase the comforts of those ... at your mercy, will essentially add to your gains ... no reasons ... can ... prevent you from bestowing your ... care ..." (Owen, 1967:262).

There are undoubted parallels between the discourse of Bentham and the discourse of Owen. Both sought a conjunction between a knowledge of Man and Society and the production of profit. Both worked within specific epistemological conditions. That 'constituent model' which the human sciences 'borrowed' from the study of language declared all human behaviour to have a meaning and to "constitute a coherent whole and a system of signs" (Foucault, 1970:357). Both Owen and Bentham linked "the geneses of individuals" and "the progress of societies" (Foucault, 1977:160). However, although Bentham was interested in organic functions and conflicting desires their significance resided in the norms they endorsed, the rules that they constituted and the system that they formed. History, for Bentham, explained why life differed from the norm and the rule in specific instances. History showed Bentham how Society might progress given the ability to control functions and desires. Poynter notes that for Bentham "... prosperity was a fragile plant ... and progress an uncertain good hedged about with risk. Most men would always be poor ..." (1969:119). In contrast, Owen viewed the norms and rules by which the social system was organised as being based upon ignorance. He saw norms which restrained the potential of human development and rules which restricted social progress. For Owen, poverty in Britain was a paradox: "... in the midst of the most ample means to create wealth, all are in poverty, or in imminent danger from the effects of poverty upon others ...". (37) Industrialised production, for Owen,

37. Owen in his Report to the County of Lanark of a Plan for Relieving Public Distress and Removing Discontent (1821), quoted by Harrison (1969:68).

made poverty unnecessary. (38) It was the competitive, individualist and irrational nature of 'capitalist' production which could lead to over-production in certain branches of the economy and unemployment and hardship elsewhere.

Owen, in typically patronising tone, described Bentham as a man "... who spent a long life in an endeavour to amend laws, all based on a fundamental error, without discovering this error; and therefore was his life", continues Owen, "... occupied in showing and attempting to remedy the evils of individual laws, but never attempting to dive to the foundation of all laws ..." (1967:95). At regular intervals throughout his autobiography Owen reminds his readers of his intellectual limitations and of the fact that it was practical experience which led him to the awareness of that belief which was the fundamental error of the world - that Man determined his own character. (39) Ultimately, Owen saw "the geneses of individuals" as being dependent upon "the progress of societies" whereas, for Bentham, "the progress of societies" depended upon "the geneses of individuals". Both built their theories on the moral premise that

38. "Mr Malthus ... says that the population of the world is ever adapting to the quantity of food raised for its support; but he has not told us how much more food an intelligent and industrious people will create from the same soil, than will be produced by one ignorant and ill-governed. It is, however, as one to infinity" (Owen's "Fourth Essay", 1967:327-8).

39. "This error cannot much longer exist; for every day will make it more and more evident that the character of man, is, without a single exception, always formed for him; that it may be, and is, chiefly, created by his predecessors, that they give him, or may give him, his ideas and habits, which are the powers that govern and direct his conduct. ; Man, therefore, never did, nor is it possible he ever can, form his own character" (Owen's "Third Essay", in Owen, 1967:292).

'the happiness of the greatest number is the only legitimate object of society' but whereas Bentham sought its achievement through the exploitation of the "paramount, if not exclusive, motive of man" - "his personal interest" (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:84), Owen sought it through a fostering of the principle that man should live for the happiness of others (Harrison, 1969:49). In contrast to Bentham, then, we find Owen advocating the provision of employment for those unable to find work. Owen believed the high unemployment following the Napoleonic war was the result of over-production and a fall in demand, in association with the tendency for mechanical-power to replace labour-power. In 1817, he presented his plans for "villages of unity and mutual co-operation" to the Sturges-Bourne Select Committee on the Poor Laws. Owen believed that society had passed beyond "... the regions of poverty arising from necessity and entered those of permanent abundance". (40) What was required was the rational organisation of labour and production based not upon competition and individualism but upon co-operation and communal living.

Bentham's panopticon and Owen's parallelogram (41) both fit very well within Foucault's parameters of 'discipline' and yet they must be acknowledged to be, in many respects, conflicting bodies of discourse. The one based within capitalist relations of production

40. Written in 1827 and quoted in Harrison (1969:68).

41. Owenite communities were arranged, ideally, in a parallelogram of buildings. (See the illustration facing page 116 in Harrison, 1969, for one such design.) It was Cobbett who wrote of "Mr Owen's Parallelograms of Paupers" (Grant, 1958:334).

sought to utilize idleness in the struggle against scarcity. The other sought to supersede capitalist relations and the contradiction between idleness and abundance. For Bentham, the panoptic industry house would remove the disadvantages associated with family life and its lack of discipline. "The government of the natural Father", he wrote, "is screened from observation and ... without appeal [...]. The management of the appointed Father [in the industry house] is laid open purposely ..." (Himmelfarb, 1970:110). For Owen, family life was the mainstay of private property and a source of individualism and self-interest. ⁽⁴²⁾ The family was also an instrument of tyranny "by which the wife was subjected to, and ... made the property of her husband. She was condemned to a life of petty domestic drudgery and endless child-bearing" (Harrison, 1969:60). Within Bentham's industry houses early marriages would be allowed: they satisfied the utilitarian calculus but they also rapidly expanded the population of apprentices. Owenite communitarianism endorsed earlier marriages and easier divorces as means towards the eradication of isolation, privateness and the encouragement of an open and natural system of relationships (Harrison, 1969:60-2). When it came to education, Bentham suggested that "instruction" should begin "before the body is fit for profit-yielding occupations" (Himmelfarb, 1970:105).

42. Owen undoubtedly refused to acknowledge the power which the labour movement embodied and the changes it might have been instrumental in forcing upon the state. (See, for example, Miliband, 1954). But in seeing the family rather than 'class' as the primary divisive force in society Owen directed attention towards an institution which was identified in law and custom and which could be rationally criticised and dismantled (see Harrison, 1969:60).

Thereafter, it should be relegated to the Sabbath. Profit-yielding ability, in Bentham's calculations, began at age four. The arts were not, generally speaking, felt to be beneficial and induced "pain and pain only". Useful subjects were to be taught for their practical value ("the art of making the most of everything") and music because it filled the mind and left no room for pernicious thoughts (Himmelfarb, 1970:106-8). At New Lanark, Owen provided day schools for children up to the age of twelve (Owen, 1967:135). Emphasis, within Owenite education, was placed not upon the reproduction of useful labourers but rather upon the production of happy, confident and sociable community members.

Given the fit between Owen's ideal of the 'new moral world' and Foucault's concept of 'discipline', Foucault's emphasis upon the coercive nature of this 'micro-physics of power' and its identification with industrial capitalism must be seriously questioned. It must be granted that Owen viewed the mass of the labouring population from the superior position of one who had discovered the world's most fundamental error. (43) In a speech made in Glasgow in 1812 in honour of the educationalist Joseph Lancaster, Owen saw the benefits of a system of rational education as being the inculcation of "the habits of obedience, order, regularity, industry, and constant attention, which are to them [those in "the lower walks of life"] of more importance

43. Owen viewed the working classes, as Miliband puts it, "in pity and not in anger, as an ignorant and debased mass" (1954:238). But he served the same dish to their 'capitalist' masters, noting in his autobiography that "The rapid accumulation of wealth ... created capitalists who were among the most ignorant and injurious of the population". (1967:128).

than merely learning to read, write and account" (1967:251). But it becomes clearer from later writings, and from Owenite practices in their experimental communities, that such education was not designed to produce contentment through ignorance ⁽⁴⁴⁾ but "a just, open, sincere, and benevolent conduct" (Owen, 1967:288). Within any social formation social relations have to be organised and problems of discipline and social control tackled. Owen wanted to see self-sufficient communities cultivating the land and utilizing industrial practices to reduce labour and increase leisure. Property was to be owned communally and the communities were to be run democratically. But for Owen these were ideals to be worked towards through the gradual eradication of such 'old world' pernicious habits as personal property, social rank and so on. Marx's view that such experimental communities "By deed instead of by argument, ... have shown that production on a large scale, and in accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried on without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands," ⁽⁴⁵⁾ was too generous. Capital to begin the various communities was generally raised by the contributions of one or more wealthy benefactors or by the pooling of the members' funds and, as Harrison observes, "Each constitution reflected

44. Bentham wrote that "The grand object of the instructions to be delivered ... to ... pupils ... should be the practical one of disposing them to peace and quietness". Two propositions were to be established: "That the condition they are doomed to is as good a one ... as any other" and "That if it were not, no effort which they could use by the display of collective force would have any tendency to improve it ..." (quoted by Himmelfarb, 1970:107).

45. Inaugural Address of the Working Men's Association, quoted by Frow (1958:298).

the particular community's financial basis" (1969:180). Even Owen's 'utopian' communities have to be considered in terms of their political, legal and cultural conditions of existence. Owen's first community in the USA cost him 200,000 dollars to buy. Orbiston in Lanarkshire was created on land mortgaged for the purpose. When that community began to experience problems the mortgagees pressed for repayment and the community was wound up. A "class of masters" was invariably what the communities could not avoid, with consequent problems over government and control. But even within a social formation based upon socialisation of production and distribution, effective control of the means and conditions of production and distribution must be invested in a communal agency.

"To conceive of communal possession as representing a state of non-separation on the part of human individuals is to suppose that those individuals are not separated from the communal agents of which they are a part: human subjects are submerged in an intersubjective communion in which the will of each is the will of all" (Cutler et al., 1977:322).

This "absurd romanticism" was clearly implied in Owenite communitarian hopes, as well as appearing in the writings of Marx and, particularly, Engels (Cutler et al., *ibid.*). (46) But, given the fact that any conceptualisation of a social formation has, as conditions

46. Such romanticism is not, of course, confined to the 19th century. It appears, for example, in the intellectual marriage of Marx and Freud. For example, according to Plant, Fromm has advocated "... control by the people of the commanding heights of the economy, worker participation, a reformation of education so that educational processes can generate the spiritual renewal required, and a rediscovery of ritual and corporate arts in order that men may come together again as human beings" (1970: 82-3).

of its existence, "... economic class-relations and the possession-in-separation of certain of the means and conditions of production by a definite category of economic agents" (ibid.:322-3), Foucault's discussion of 'discipline' only in terms of the anonymous and homogeneous exercise of coercive power is equally absurd. Bentham's scheme sought to provide the political and cultural conditions for his industry houses through a system of psychological socialisation and conditioning which would make political debate and conflict redundant. Owen's plans sought to produce their political and cultural conditions through the application of a rational education based upon a social science (Harrison, 1969:78 et seq.). Political debate would be based upon facts ("Can man, when possessing the full vigour of his faculties, form a rational judgement on any subject, until he has first collected all the facts respecting it which are known", Owen, 1967:295), and upon their validity as scientific knowledge ("It is ... important that the mind ... receive those ideas only which are consistent with each other, which are in unison with all the known facts ... and which are therefore true", ibid.:296). Under Foucault's formulation, however, political debate/conflict does not become simply redundant. Disciplinary mechanisms are the "dark side" of the rule of law and democracy which characterise 'capitalism' (1977:222) and we must presume, then, that there is capacity for dissent. But by what medium can dissent be expressed; towards which agencies and institutions can debate/conflict be directed? How can there be "innumerable points of confrontation" and an "at least temporary inversion of the power relations" when each "micro-power" is

part of an "entire network"? (ibid.:27). Disciplinary mechanisms must be considered in terms of their cultural, legal, political (etc.) conditions of existence and in terms of their own specificity and effectivity within a determinate social formation.

5. Towards a Science of Welfare

"Discipline 'makes' individuals" (Foucault, 1977:170)

The previous section has utilized some of the categories which define Foucault's concept of 'discipline' and applied them to an analysis of Bentham's and Owen's plans designed to solve the 'Poor Law problem'. It has been argued that although Bentham's and Owen's discourses had the same epistemological conditions of existence and that although they both attempted to use basically the same categories of a social science, they produced significantly different forms of solutions to the 'problem' in question. Both Owen and Bentham sought a scientific manipulation of what they saw as the plasticity of human nature. But for Bentham this was a necessary control of needs and desires which would otherwise know no bounds and would ruin the nation. Bentham's fear of that 'Other' which resided in human desires demanded the scientific exploitation of that which was generalisable. Bentham desired to individualise not to facilitate the realisation of human potential (that unknown 'Other') but to control differences, to homogenize, to normalise, to produce the 'Same'. Foucault writes:

"In a sense, the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. [...] the norm introduces as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences" (1977:184).

Owen, on the other hand, believed that civilisation had progressed to a point at which human potential could be freed from Bentham's fear of scarcity. Owen's 'education' was not designed to individualise but to allow for individuality. For Owen, 'education' would do two things: teach useful habits of mind ('always seek to promote the happiness of others'); and shelter plastic minds from dangerous influences (parents, for example). In effect, Owen sought homogeneity to facilitate individuality: Bentham sought to individualise to facilitate homogeneity.

Bentham and Owen seem to reflect without refraction those models outlined by Foucault in The Order of Things and which he calls "Ricardo's 'pessimism' and Marx's revolutionary promise" (1970:261). "Such a system of options", he writes:

"represents nothing more than the two possible ways of examining the relations of anthropology and History as they are established by economics through the notions of scarcity and labour. For Ricardo, History fills the void produced by anthropological finitude and expressed in a perpetual scarcity, until the moment when a point of definitive stabilization is attained; according to the Marxist interpretation, History, by dispossessing man of his labour, causes the positive form of his finitude to spring into relief - his material truth is finally liberated" (ibid.).

Foucault argues that both discourses, at the archaeological level, depend upon the same epistemological conditions of existence and that, consequently, they are part of the same historical continuity. This, however, is an empirical observation. [Epistemological conditions do not determine the effectivity of discourses.] Clearly, in setting down the conditions of existence of a social formation, one cannot legislate for those conditions which would contribute towards a transformation of that formation. At the most basic level, however, one might offer the view that a contributory factor in the failure of Owenism to effect any lasting socialist changes within 19th century capitalist relations was its refusal to acknowledge the political conditions of existence of those relations. Owenism relied heavily on the view that the self-evident truth of its historical and social scientific propositions would eventually lead to a socialisation and democratisation of production relations. This faith in its own scientific destiny led to a refusal by Owen and many of his followers to enter into political debate or conflict ⁽⁴⁷⁾ (Thompson, 1977:885). Nevertheless, it is also of value to note that Owen was probably more aware than many of his radical opponents of the fact that effective

47. So strong was Owen's belief in the ultimate power of commonsense facts to "peaceably and quietly" supersede "the existing ignorant, false, wicked and insane system" (1967:iv) that, at the age of 87, he was still writing: "It is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that can save society from the effects of its fatal and gross ignorant fundamental error". And: "... without destroying or injuring the old system of society, the new, with its new divine surroundings, will in every division of it be commenced on new sites, and be ready to receive willing passengers from the old ... until the new shall gradually increase to become sufficient to accommodate in a very superior manner the population of the world" (ibid.:xxxii).

changes could not be guaranteed by piecemeal reforms and an extension of the franchise. (48)

Neither Bentham nor Owen had his scheme to solve the ever-present problems of the Poor Laws accepted by the government of the day. Both schemes present us with a view of the outer-limits of discourse on wealth and labour, idleness and welfare. It is between these outer-limits that we must trace the form of that discursive positivity that is here termed the science of welfare.

(i) "Functions" and "Norms". The science of welfare has its beginning at that moment when Man became both the subject and object of scientific study. There is, of course, a concern with welfare before the 19th century. Legislation such as Hanway's Act of 1767, for example, which obliged poor law officials in London to send all pauper children under the age of six into the country rather than take them into poor houses where so many were, otherwise, destined to die in infancy (Nicholls, 1904:63), was undoubtedly based upon a 'scientific' calculation of the causes and risks of mortality. But not until the 19th century would welfare become a science of human functions and desires and a calculation of their finitude.

48. Thompson notes: "So far from being backward-looking in its outlook, Owenism was the first of the great social doctrines to grip the imagination of the masses ... What was at issue was ... not the size of the industrial enterprise but the control of the social capital behind it. The building craftsmen ... who resented control and ... profits passing to master-builders ... did not suppose that the solution lay in a multitude of petty entrepreneurs. Rather, they wished the co-operation of skills involved in building to be reflected in co-operative social control" (1977:885).

The year 1796 saw the foundation of The Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor. In a letter to friends, William Wilberforce, Sir Thomas Bernard, the Bishop of Durham and the Hon. E.J. Eliot suggested the formation of the Society - "Joint labours have produced inventions etc. in other fields; why not in the science of promoting welfare?" (quoted by Poynter, 1969:91). Emphasis was given to encouraging self-help. The poor were corrupted by their circumstances but, given guidance and encouragement, they could learn to stand on their own feet. (49)

The Society, then, concerned itself with the collection of information and its distribution to the poor. Clearly, if it was the lot of the poor to remain in poverty then they must use every means to rationalise their spending, living and eating habits. Following the lead of Count Rumford, who had made a reputation in Munich as a reformer and who prepared detailed redesigns of fireplaces, stoves and kettles for greater efficiency and various cheap and easily prepared recipes for the poor, the Society gave emphasis in its reports to dietary economies and efficiency in the use of stoves and the cooking of meals (50) (David Owen, 1965:106).

49. Bernard, notes Poynter, wished to appeal to the ambitions of the poor. "Let us give effect to that master spring of action, on which equally depends the prosperity of individuals and of empires - THE DESIRE IMPLANTED IN THE HUMAN BREAST OF BETTERING ITS CONDITION" (Bernard, quoted by Poynter, 1969:92).

50. In his "First Essay", Robert Owen cited Rumford's work in Munich as proof that his own work in New Lanark was not merely visionary (Owen, 1967: 271). Later, in the "Third Essay" he notes that although he had done much for the workers of New Lanark - "They had not been taught the most valuable domestic and social habits: such as the most economical method of preparing food; how to arrange their dwellings with neatness, and to keep them always clean and in order" (ibid.:287).

Bernard and his colleagues adhered to that 'moral economy' which dictated that the wealthier classes ought to assist the poor in their moments of need. As always, the problem was one of balancing assistance given against the danger of thereby encouraging idleness: one had to ensure the less-eligibility principle. As "injudicious or misapplied liberality" could discourage self-help it was necessary to make "the inquiry into all that concerns the POOR ... a SCIENCE" by investigating "practically, and upon system" (Bernard, quoted by Poynter, 1969:93). The Society, then, issued "Twelve Golden Rules" which testify to its blending of 'moral economy' and a science of welfare. Sitting comfortably alongside purely moral rules ('Idolatry of the gin bottle is most disgraceful'; 'The government taxes us, so why tax ourselves with drunkenness and laziness') are those which mix economic and moral considerations ('Industry and frugality are the best masters'; 'Time is our most valuable property') and those more purely economic in nature ('The best bargain is found in the open market'). Slipped in between them all, however, are Rumford-inspired statements of practical science: 'Roasting and broiling waste meat, and the good wife makes stews'; 'Stoves should be covered and fires burned in narrow chimneys' (Poynter's paraphrasing of the rules, 1969:94). To a knowledge of the body which defines minimum requirements for bodily functioning, scientific welfare adds a sociology of the cultural norm. If the poor waste money in inefficient eating habits, those norms must be redefined within the natural limitations of functions. As an approach to the problem of 'income maintenance' it is not without contemporary

relevance. Any policy of income maintenance requires a base-line. The previous chapter outlined that adopted by 18th century magistrates who used a bread-scale of allowances. The concept of a guaranteed minimum income embodied in national systems of social security are attempts to compromise between the demands of simple survival (absolute poverty) and the demands of fairness and egalitarianism (relative poverty). (51) In 1937, a Political and Economic Planning publication was able to note that in "... practice both the Unemployment Assistance Board and the public assistance committee allowances compare not unfavourably with the B.M.A. standards [of minimum diets] in households with no children or only one child, but much less favourably in households with two or more children" (P.E.P., 1937:153).

Given the anarchic nature of production and distribution under capitalist relations of production, which have, as conditions of their existence, the effective separation of labour from control of the means and conditions of production and circulation and the separation of the agencies of production and distribution (enterprises), there are a number of consequences. First, unemployment: capitalist relations of production do not imply the existence of an agency to centrally control the demand and supply of labour. Secondly, those without property who have no labour to sell (the disabled; sick; old) cannot earn wages and cannot buy necessary commodities. For support they must rely on

51. See the "Introduction" to Poverty (Selected Readings), edited by Roach and Roach (1972). The interest shown by British social scientists in the incidence of poverty has produced a large body of literature which agonises over the problem of balancing absolute and relative measures of poverty.

the assistance of family or friends (who may have little or no surplus income); the charity of others; or the legal transfer of wealth from those who have a surplus over their basic needs. Thirdly, the production of commodities is not governed by criteria of social usefulness and, consequently, there are likely to be shortages of commodities required by those with low income (homes; medical care; etc). For the most convinced supporter of laissez-faire, these consequences implied that the unemployed person must 'get on his bike' and search for a job; whilst in employment, spending must be regulated to allow a surplus to be saved in case of sickness or for old age. ⁽⁵²⁾ It was the view of Sir Frederic Eden, in 1797, that "The capital stock of every society, if left to its free course, will be divided among different employments, in the proportion that is most agreeable to the public interest, by the private views of individuals" (quoted by Poynter, 1969:113). But, as Poynter notes, Eden also saw the economic advantages of rescuing the infant poor (augmentation of labour supply) and curing the sick ⁽⁵³⁾

52. A good deal of "Book II" of Eden's The State of the Poor is given over to describing the diet, dress, fuel and habitation of the 'labouring classes'. It was Eden's belief that the reason why "the labourer does not have more for his shilling" lay in his adherence to "improvident systems in dress, diet, and in other branches of private expenditure" (written in 1797; Eden, 1928:100).

53. Amongst those who had no hesitation in demanding the complete abolition of the Poor Laws a more ruthless line was taken. John Davidson, a follower of the Malthusian theory of population, could find in his heart no grounds on which a right to relief could be based. Even disability could be foreseen and prepared for: "if a person has given no proof of a desire to provide at all for himself against such seasons, the fault and the suffering ought to go together" (Considerations on the Poor Laws, 1817; quoted in Poynter, 1969:233).

(maintaining a healthy labour supply) (ibid.:112) and Eden began "Book II" of his famous study of the state of the poor by endorsing the view "That it is the duty of every man, according to his abilities and opportunities, to relieve his fellow creatures in distress ..." (1928:85). Such a conglomerate of views demanded, of course, a process of calculation which would allow assistance to be given without encouraging idleness (the principle of less-eligibility) and a process of supervision to police the giving of assistance. But the science of welfare did not simply entail a normative regulation of the "geneses of individuals": it also implied the regulation of conflict arising from the antagonistic nature of economic class relations within capitalist relations of production.

(ii) "Conflict" and "Rules". It takes no great feat of imagination to appreciate the anxiety felt by the 'respectable classes' at the knowledge that within their cities and towns swarmed a growing body of the 'dangerous classes' who, at times of economic depression, might take the law into their own hands. During the economic crises of the mid and late 1790s, "Both London and the provinces broke out into something of a rash of food charities ..." (David Owen, 1965:108). As David Owen notes, The Society for Bettering the Condition ... of the Poor set up a soup kitchen in London in 1797 and immediately found itself feeding ten thousand people twice a week (ibid.). It would be churlish to deny that the support given to such schemes (54) was

54. The Society attracted donations totalling £10,000 in 1799 - 1800 from 23 commercial and corporate bodies and 540 individuals (David Owen, 1965:108). And see the discussion of the use of soup kitchens during this period as a means of social control, in Stevenson (1977).

motivated, to some degree, by a fear of the 'dangerous classes'.

Nicholls adorned the frontispiece of his History of the English Poor Law with the following quotation from Babbage:

"Whenever, for the purposes of government, we arrive, in any state of society, at a class so miserable as to be in the want of the common necessities of life, a new principle comes into action. The usual restraints which are sufficient for the well-fed, are often useless in checking the demands of hungry stomachs. Other and more powerful means must then be employed; a larger array of military or police force must be maintained. Under such circumstances, it may be considerably cheaper to fill empty stomachs to the point of ready obedience, than to compel starving wretches to respect the roast beef of their more industrious neighbours ..."

There is little sign here of that 'bourgeois' hypocrisy which conducted "the social war" "under the disguise of peace and philanthropy" of which Engels wrote in 1845 (quoted by Foster, 1974: 178). Rather, we witness a political decision based on economic expediency and an economic expediency dependent for success upon application of the less-eligibility principle. The quotation continues: "... and it may be expedient, in a mere economical point of view, to supply gratuitously the wants even of able-bodied persons, if it can be done without creating crowds of additional applicants".

In 1775, Jonas Hanway, that "most effective of eighteenth century philanthropists" (Webb and Webb, 1927:298), wrote in his The Defects of Police that "coercive power and the fear of punishment are the grand preservatives of order and the guardians of human happiness" (quoted by Coates, 1960:43). If the 18th century

discriminated in order to control more efficiently it might, however, be said that the 19th century controlled in order to discriminate more efficiently. Given the relationship between wage rates and rates of public and charitable relief to the destitute which the less-eligibility principle polices, rates of public relief clearly cannot become the subject of negotiation through political debate because of the implications this would have on wage negotiation. (55) If relief is to be given, then, it must either be administered surreptitiously (56) or it must be finely tailored to the precise 'needs' of the recipient. The means for attaining such exactitude was, in fact, suggested by Hanway as early as 1780 in his The Citizen's Monitor. Towards the end of the previous chapter, attention was drawn to the apparent conflation of 'discrimination' and 'individualisation' which was occurring in legislation on welfare and in welfare discourse more

55. Wages are the result of conflict and struggle between capitals and labour. A facet of the ideological conditions of existence of this struggle are theories as to the source and form of wages, for example, the wage-fund theory. Malthus, in his earlier works, crudely defined demand for labour in terms of the fund available for its maintenance (Poynter, 1969:151), and his influence is evident in the 1817 Select Committee's Report: "... whoever ... is maintained by the law as a labouring pauper, is maintained only instead of some other individual, who would otherwise have earned by his own industry, the money bestowed on the pauper" (1817:17).

56. The phenomenon of the failure of a percentage of those entitled to state benefits to take up the benefit reflects ambiguities and tensions in their provision. Perhaps, it could be argued, failure to accept benefits reflects the fact that they really are not needed. To what extent should positive efforts be made to publicise benefits? In 1886, Chamberlain issued a circular from the Local Government Board in which he noted: "It is not desirable that the working classes should be familiarised with poor law relief, and if once the honourable sentiment which now leads them to avoid it is broken down, it is probable that recourse will be had to this provision on the slightest occasion" (quoted by Bruce, 1975:134).

widely towards the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. As the Webbs record: "'Visiting the Poor' - that is, investigating the circumstances of the applicants for outdoor relief - ... begins to be insisted on in the better governed Vestries from the beginning of the nineteenth century" (1927:164).

In 1819, the Select Vestry Act empowered the inhabitants of any parish to establish a select vestry of substantial householders or occupiers who would meet once a fortnight, at least, "... to determine upon the proper objects of relief, and the nature and amount ... to be given; 'and in each case shall take into consideration the character and conduct of the poor person to be relieved, and shall be at liberty to distinguish ... between the deserving and the idle, extravagant, or profligate poor'". (57) Both this Act and the 1818 Parish Vestry Act were introduced by Sturges Bourne, chairman of the 1817 Select Committee on the Poor Laws, who hoped to improve the operation of the Poor Laws by vesting their control in the hands of "persons of property and intelligence". (58) Both Acts emphasised the necessity for preserving parish records and the later Act instituted the requirement of keeping vestry minutes of all proceedings which were then to be "laid before the inhabitants in general vestry assembled" twice a

57. 59 George III, cap.12, quoted by Nicholls (1904:181).

58. See Nicholls (1904:179). The 1817 Report noted that where success had been achieved by the use of workhouses this had been as a result of their superintendence by the principal inhabitants of the district (Nicholls, 1904:173). Sturges Bourne was later to become a member of the 1834 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. The Act of 1818 introduced a voting system for vestries which related the number of votes to the rates paid, up to a maximum of six votes.

year (Nicholls, 1904:182). During the Classical period, the names of those receiving relief were to be entered into a parish book;⁽⁵⁹⁾ refusal to enter a poor house resulted in removal from the book: the power of the word as sign was its power to represent the status of 'deserving pauper'. The Acts of 1818 and 1819, however, displayed a new form of the power of language, for it now provided access not merely to those classified as worthy or not for relief but also made visible the process of such investigation: the investigators could also be investigated.

Whereas Gilbert's Act of 1782 had attempted to tighten up the management of the Poor Laws by investing control in justices of the peace through the power to select guardians and visitors, the Act of 1819 clearly attempted to widen the influence of ratepayers. Should anyone who was refused relief make complaint to a justice, he was to make an order for relief only after examining the overseers, and such an order was to last for one month only (Nicholls, 1904:182). As Nicholls comments, this was "... a considerable curtailment of the power in ordering relief" which had earlier been conferred upon justices in 1815.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The 1817 Select Committee had made a point of recording that justices were not in a position to judge the merits of claimants, a view endorsed by Nicholls who felt that "... their social position and

59. See 3 William and Mary, cap.11 (1691) and 9 George I, cap.7 (1722).

60. By 55 George III, cap.137 justices could order relief for up to 3 months.

habits of life place them at a distance from the poorest class, and prevent their seeing or knowing so much of it as is seen and known by persons in the usual grade of overseers ...". As a consequence, justices were "... more likely to have their sympathies excited and their minds influenced by a tale of distress, real or fictitious; and they have not the same ready means of ascertaining the truth which persons in a less elevated rank of life possess ..."

(1904:154. Emphasis added). Sturges Bourne clearly agreed. The Act of 1819 made provision for paid overseers to be elected by select vestries.

What we have, then, is a further reminder that capitalist relations of production cannot be understood in terms of the 'rule of industrial capital' or other equally simplistic homilies. Rather, we must acknowledge that a variety of capitals may exist, and may be in conflict. The obvious conflict in British history is that between industrial capital and the landed interest, its most obvious manifestation being the Corn Laws. Justices of the peace, as Hogg (1979:7) emphasises, were "... tied very strongly to the landed gentry and the traditional pattern of social relations ...". But rather than cast the scene as Hogg suggests it, ⁽⁶¹⁾ one must see legislation in terms of its political conditions of existence. There is no homogeneous "ruling bloc" - if there were, why would it have to 'advance'? A facet

61. Hogg sees the local/centre dichotomy as the major axis around which political and other conflicts of the late 18th, early 19th centuries revolved and notes: "The ruling bloc in this period advanced only at the expense of, and only insofar as it could subjugate, [the] ... surviving bases of power and privilege" (1979:7).

of the political conditions was the class struggle between capitals and aristocracy and labour: justices were one element in that struggle. As Hogg says, the justices were admirably placed to frustrate the effective execution of certain pieces of legislation. But what is frustrated is not "... the efforts of central power to mould conditions favourable to their own economic and political advancement" (ibid.). This is to suggest either that Parliament is filled with economic and political opportunists who have agreed to share the spoils or that Parliamentary members represent class interests without remainder. The Report of the 1834 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws readily endorsed the views of the 1817 Report on the inappropriateness of the justices to the task of deciding whether or not relief should be allowed with, of course, empirical evidence from Commissioners' reports. (62) But it is likely that Whig and Tory could accept, in general, the plea made by the Commissioners that their remarks were directed less against magistrates personally and, rather, against "the jurisdiction exercised by them respecting relief". (63)

62. The 1834 Report quotes from Chadwick's account of how he endeavoured to "... ascertain from several of the magistrates who are advocates for the allowance system or for the regulation of wages, in what way the labouring man within their districts expends for his maintenance the sum which they have declared to be the minimum expenditure, to sustain life". Chadwick challenged magistrates to declare how they could possibly set aside the decision of a parish officer if they did not know "... how many commodities were absolute necessities for [the labourer] ... and the exact quantity and the price of each". Chadwick then provides "the rule" (the correctness of which is attested by statements of witnesses "who have had much experience in maintaining considerable numbers"): "by adding rent and 20 per cent as the retailer's profit on commodities, an estimate may be made of the expense at which a single person may live, in the same manner that a number are kept in a workhouse ..." (Penguin edition, Checkland and Checkland, editors, 1974:221-2).

63. Checkland's and Checkland's Penguin edition of the 1834 Report, cited hereafter as "1834 Report".

The three or four decades prior to the enquiry were dominated by disturbances which threatened revolution and the tenuous security of life and property of the landed aristocracy, capitalist farmer and industrialist alike. The period was one of "acute social disturbance", to quote Thompson (1977:13) who sees the period 1780 to 1832 as the moment of the 'making' of the English 'working class'. It is understandable, then, that both conservative and liberal factions in Parliament supported the New Poor Law. (64) After all, it held out hope of rationalising an increasingly confusing system: it sought to abolish allowances in aid of wages (65) in the belief that this would effectively raise agricultural wages and reduce rates (1834 Report:346); and it sought to discipline the reckless demands of labour such as "that paroxysm" of 1830 (66) which had forced farmers and gentry to "bribe" their way out of conflict with labourers by raising wages (ibid.:148-9). (67)

64. Lubenow (1971:40-1) where reference is made to Parliamentary 'division lists'.

65. The intention to tackle this issue was firmly registered by the passing of 2 and 3 William IV, cap.96 in 1832, a temporary Act expressly forbidding the use of rates to make up wages.

66. The so-called "Last Labourers' Revolt", see Thompson (1967: 249-53).

67. Lubenow maintains that Poor Law reform was presented as a non-partisan national issue and that it is "... a major problem to determine the class in whose interest this legislation was intended" (1971:42). This is a familiar scenario.

Legislation, of course, is not "intended" for the "interest" of an economic class. It is a synthesis of a number of conditions and it would be naive to overlook the political struggles involved and as well not to over-emphasise the effectiveness of legislation.

We can see in legislation prior to the Royal Commission some attempt being made to change the structure of control over the implementation of the Poor Laws: the Parish Vestry Act and the Select Vestry Act sought to involve 'substantial property' owners more generally in local poor relief ⁽⁶⁸⁾ and to encourage the use of more permanent, paid overseers. But in welfare discourse more generally can be seen the epistemological conditions for a science of welfare which the New Poor Law embodied and which begins to trace the trajectory of that positivity which we know as social work.

(iii) "Signification" and "System" : The Examination

"... on the projected surface of language, man's behaviour appears as an attempt to say something; his slightest gestures, even their involuntary mechanisms and their failures, have a meaning; and everything he arranges around him by way of objects, rites, customs ... constitute a coherent whole and a system of signs" (Foucault, The Order of Things:357).

"... the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification" (Foucault, Discipline and Punish:187).

It is all too easy, when considering the New Poor Law, to concentrate upon the Commissioners' Report to the neglect of the Act. But as the Webbs point out, the Act abolished no local authority,

68. Hobhouse's Act (1 and 2 William iv, cap.60) of 1831, an enabling Act only, set the number of vestrymen elected according to the number of ratepayers (Nicholls, 1904:205-6).

removed no local officials and did not interfere in the jurisdiction of the magistracy (1929:100). The Report had recommended the outlawing of all outdoor relief to the able-bodied and their families (1834 Report:375), whereas Section 52 of the Act empowered the Commissioners to regulate the use of relief to the able-bodied by rules and orders "as difficulties may arise in case any immediate and universal remedy is attempted to be applied" (Nicholls, 1904:277). The theory behind the recommendation to abolish outdoor relief demanded a "well-regulated" workhouse (69) with which to 'test' the applicant. Now, although the theory and the empirical evidence adduced suggested that most such applicants would fail the test (that is, refuse to enter the workhouse), such a test would be a dead letter if there was no workhouse or there were insufficient places available. In fact, the variations in kind and practice of workhouses, houses of industry, poor houses, alms houses etc. throughout the nation made uniformity of practice into a pipedream. Eden's State of the Poor (1797) provides

69. The concept of a "well-regulated" workhouse provides an example of the marriage between a sociology of the cultural norm and minimum requirements for human functioning. The 1834 Report makes clear that the workhouse did not have to "approach the lowest point at which existence may be maintained" in order to make the "pauper's situation irksome". What was required was, rather, "strict discipline" and the removal of "acknowledged luxuries, such as fermented liquors and tobacco" (1834 Report:338). The Webbs provide for us a description of a "well-regulated" workhouse: "... appalling strictness of classification, order, regularity, cleanliness, confinement and discipline. 'The man goes to one part of the house, the wife to the other, and the children into the schoolroom. Separation is strictly enforced. Their own clothes are taken off, and the uniform of the workhouse put on. No beer, tobacco or snuff is allowed. Regular hours kept, or meals forfeited. Everyone must appear in a state of cleanliness. No access to bedrooms during the day. No communication with friends out of doors'" (1927:255; quoting from the report of an Assistant Commissioner, 1833).

numerous 'parochial reports' which reflect these variations and give some idea of the number of persons in workhouses (though not the number of available places) and the number of inhabitants in the parish. In general, where a workhouse was available its occupants (usually women, children and the aged) comprised something less than one per cent of the parish population. Figures available from Returns made to Parliament show that there were less than 4,000 workhouses in England and Wales in 1802-3 with less than 84,000 inhabitants (Poynter, 1969:189). (70) The ratio of available places to total inhabitants is unlikely to have changed dramatically following the advent of the New Poor Law. Ashforth found that in 1841 the population of Ashton-under-Lyne was 102,000 and the workhouse could accommodate 145 (1976:133). As Ashforth says, the workhouses were simply not capable of coping with massive temporary unemployment (ibid.:134). (71) We have to be cautious, then, in our estimation of the workhouse of the 19th century. There is little doubt of its symbolic power. For the poor of the 19th century it was the 'Bastille' (Nicholls, 1904:311): for the poor of the 20th century, there still remain the occasional architectural links, with hospitals that were once

70. By 1815, these figures were estimated at 4,000 and 100,000 (Webb and Webb, 1927:215).

71. The Leicester workhouse held 500 paupers: in 1847-8, 17,000 claims to relief were made (Ashforth, 1976:134). Figures from Hanson (1971:116) show that in 1849 there were 1,088,659 claims for relief of which 133,513 were relieved 'indoor'. Figures for other years were: 1862 - 917,142: 132,236; 1882 - 788,289: 183,374; 1892 - 744,757: 186,607. These figures suggest a relatively constant 'indoor' population of, presumably, mainly the non able-bodied (the insane, sick, aged). Figures of 'indoor' paupers were generally higher in the 'hungry forties', however (Table in Rose, 1971:128-9).

workhouses and social work departments that were once those of the relieving officer (see Rees, 1978, for example). But the workhouse did not 'divert the threat' of the 'dangerous classes' to the "legitimacy of the social order" by "removing those human elements who proved unable to accept" the terms of "the market" (Garland, 1981:33). (72) As a means of defining and policing idleness, the Poor Law was one element within a wider body of welfare discourse: the workhouse coped with the detritus of a system of production based upon capitalist relations and held out a threat to the able-bodied who might be tempted into idleness or who might not prepare for unemployment, sickness and old age.

The workhouse test was to have been the instrument of the less-eligibility principle. It was to have been the means of achieving a perfect balance between culturally defined needs and individual functions. "The bane of all pauper legislation has been the legislating for extreme cases" argued the 1834 Report: it was the loophole through which slipped all fraudulent claims to relief (1834 Report:376-7). Yet to attempt to prepare "rules" and "tests" by which each claimant might be investigated would not be foolproof and could lead not only to the fraudulent being relieved but also to the deserving being rejected; an event "at variance with the popular sentiment" (ibid.:386-7). The workhouse test was seen as "a self-acting test of the claim of the

72. Garland actually talks about the "prison" and the "poorhouse" but his argument seems more appropriate to the former (following Foucault). Fraser (1976:5) quotes Local Government Board figures for the years 1859, 1864, 1869 and 1874 which show the adult able-bodied as being less than 18% of all 'indoor' paupers and the adult male able-bodied as less than 7% (i.e. less than 10,000 for 1849; less than 14,000 for 1892).

applicant". It would draw a perfect "line between those who do and those who do not need relief" (ibid.:378). The claimant, in effect, defined his own needs by accepting or rejecting the 'offer of the house'. But, as Rose indicates, large scale unemployment and the "determined resistance" in manufacturing areas, particularly in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, meant that the workhouse test could not be enforced by the new Poor Law Commission (1971:140). (73)

Thus, although in 1844 the Commission issued a General Order - the "Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order" - which made relief dependent upon entry to a workhouse, it was not made universal. Unions such as those in industrial areas subject to phases of heavy unemployment were issued with the "Outdoor Labour Test Order" (1842) which insisted that able-bodied males, relieved 'outdoor', were to receive at least half of their relief in kind rather than in cash and were to be set to work (the labour 'test'). Such work was to be monotonous and unpleasant in order to act as a less-eligibility test (Rose, 1971:140). Rose notes that on taking over from the Commission in 1847, the new Poor Law Board found that many Unions were providing relief with few strictures and, consequently, issued a further General Order in 1852 - the "Outdoor Relief Regulation Order". (74)

It was, says Rose, greeted by a "storm of protest" from guardians who felt the Order was an unwarranted interference with their discretion (1971:141). The Board quickly

73. According to Young and Ashton (1956:48) "not a single Union in Lancashire or the West Riding had discontinued out-relief to able-bodied men" by 1841.

74. Rose provides extracts from all three orders (1971:143-8).

amended the Order to cover, primarily, able-bodied males rather than all paupers in general. The amended Order, and the "Instructional Letter" accompanying it, provided so many 'exceptions to the rule', however, that guardians were left with a large degree of scope for interpretation. It is particularly ironical that the aims of the New Poor Law, the eradication 'at a stroke' of the morass of Poor Law legislation, should have ultimately led to an equally tortuous set of administrative rules. In trying to enforce the less-eligibility principle under circumstances which so obviously contradicted its premises, the Central Authority was forced to compromise itself. (75)

If public relief was to be given and if it was not possible to ensure eligibility through a universal and uniform workhouse or labour 'test', then methods of policing relief given in the community had to be instituted. The 1834 Report discussed one such alternative and rejected it. The investigation of each and every claim was, the Commissioners felt, "cumbrous and expensive", "inefficient" and "unpopular" (1834 Report:386-7). The most efficient system of investigation that the Commissioners had found was that operated by those administering Friendly Societies (ibid.:388). But even "The labouring classes themselves [found] ... these daily visits and strict regulations inadequate substitutes for the means of supervision and

75. In a Minute issued by the Local Government Board of Scotland in 1878, it is emphasised that the Parochial Boards had no power to expend funds on the able-bodied but only on the wholly or partially disabled destitute. The Minute, however, adds: "... it is obvious that if a person is really destitute, no long period would elapse before he also became disabled from want of food" (The Local Government Board for Scotland, 1897:94).

prevention which well-regulated workhouses afford ..." (ibid.:390). We shall see, however, that although for the framers and administrators of the New Poor Law, panopticism was, ideally, examination through incarceration, in practical terms the investigation of signs (was the claimant trying to better his position; what is his moral standing; is he a diligent worker?) had little significance when divorced from the system which gave them meaning (the home; the community; the labour market). It must be borne in mind that the concept of the examination describes a relation of knowledge and power. The workhouse and labour 'tests' were essentially coercive instruments. They were based upon a sociology and a psychology of need but, in their practice, they were coercive. (76)

Given that some unemployment was the inevitable consequence of the anarchy of competition under capitalist relations of production, it was important to leave the able-bodied within the community where they might again find employment. It is in such circumstances that the knowledge-power relation becomes a science of welfare through the process of examination.

There were, of course, other models for the 'citizen's monitor', the visitor of the poor, available to the Poor Law Commissioners. In

76. Prior to the infamous Andover Case in 1845, there had been numerous rumours of cruelty in workhouses and several had appeared in the press (there was, of course, much opposition to the New Poor Law from Tory Radicals - see Rose, 1971:109-20). In effect, the Andover Case was used to amplify concern over the lack of accountability to Parliament of the Commissioners for the Poor Law and resulted, in 1847, in the creation of the Poor Law Board Act. Nevertheless, the cause of the original complaint (that workhouse inmates, employed on bone-crushing for fertiliser, had been so hungry as to eat "the half-putrid gristle and marrow") served to highlight the inevitable tendencies of a thorough application of the less-eligibility principle. (See discussion of the Andover Case by Webb and Webb, 1929:179-82).

1796, the Baron von Voght had published his Account of the Management of the Poor in Hamburg in which he described "an elaborate system of district 'visiting' to test claims for relief". "Voght's 'principle' of relief - 'to reduce ... support lower than what any industrious man or woman ... could earn' - anticipated less eligibility" (Poynter, 1969:87 and footnote). By 1817, Thomas Chalmers was contributing his own brand of Malthusian condemnation of the very concept of a Poor Law to the pages of the influential Edinburgh Review (Poynter, 1969:234). (77) For Chalmers, it was the Poor Laws which induced pauperism by destroying independence and neighbourly assistance. In 1819, Chalmers began to put his ideas into practice in a poor parish of Glasgow. Outdoor relief was prohibited in the parish. The population of 10,000 was divided into 25 districts each under the supervision of a deacon. The deacon had the task of investigating the circumstances of those who asked for relief and of easing the flow of the "Four Fountains": self-help; the assistance of relatives; "the sympathy of the wealthier for the poorer class"; and ("greatly more productive than the last"), "the sympathy of the poor for one another" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:45-6; and see Young and Ashton, 1956:95-6). Chalmers' visitors were to be trained to understand the parishioners, to "feel a kind of property in families" and to act not as an almoner but as a friend (Woodroffe, 1974:47). The science of welfare and the examination were clearly advocated in Chalmers' approach:

77. Discussing criticisms of the Old Poor Law, Rose notes: "Many people, influenced by the writings of a Glasgow minister, the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, advocated the adoption of the Scottish system of relief, which relied mainly on private charity" (1971:21). The 1817 Select Committee specifically sought evidence from Scotland (prior to Chalmers' work, of course).

"It is not enough that you give money, you must give it with judgement. You must give your time and attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination: for instance, will charity corrupt him into slothfulness? What is his particular necessity? ... You must go to the poor man's sick bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. You must examine his accounts. You must try to recover those wages which are detained by the injustice or the rapacity of the master. You must employ your mediation with his superiors, and represent to them the necessities of the situation" (quoted by Young and Ashton, 1956:78).

Within the process of the giving of relief there is a process of examination and judgement which individualises and objectifies. This is a process which operates from a position of authority based upon specialised knowledge. It is this authority and this knowledge which allow the visitor, the 'social' worker, to act as mediator not in the name of justice but in the name of economic 'good sense'. As Foucault notes, the examination "makes each individual a 'case'" (1977:191). The examination constituted "... the individual as a describable, analysable object, not in order to reduce him to 'specific' features, as did the naturalist in relation to living beings, but in order to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution ... under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge ...". But, in addition, the examination constituted "... a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given 'population' (Foucault, 1977:190).

Writers such as Woodroffe are right to draw attention to that line of continuity which links Chalmers' views to the aims and methods of contemporary social work. But it is not within the empty shell of Chalmers' "emphasis on the necessity to select and train ... visitors to understand and handle effectively all applications" (Woodroffe, 1974:47) that continuity resides, such an emphasis might be expected of any scheme of organised public relief and would rest comfortably within socialist relations of production. It is the discursive regularity which is termed here scientific welfare, and within which Chalmers finds a place, which forms the line of continuity. It is what Donzelot calls "investigatory knowledge" -- the social enquiry (1980:117) -- which signifies what is common to the 19th century visitor of the poor and the contemporary social worker.

Social enquiry was being practised at the time of the 1817 Select Committee on the Poor Laws (78) and, as the 1834 Report records, Friendly Societies often adopted what Tidd Pratt called, in his evidence, the "domiciliary visit". (79) Pratt advised the Commissioners that such precautions were ineffectual and the Commissioners, convinced that

78. Mr John Weaver giving evidence to the Committee: "Is every individual who is relieved out of the house, relieved at a specific rate?" -- "We relieve them as near as possible, according to the situation of their families". "You endeavour to make up the sum necessary for their relief?" -- "Yes; and there is no case relieved but what has been often visited by the officer of the parish, and no fresh case is taken without visitation". "And you inquire into the earnings?" -- "We go into the habitation of the pauper" (1817:32).

79. Such visits were, according to Pratt, made every day at random times, to "increase the chances of detection" (1834 Report:389).

fraudulent claims were the major drain on poor relief, knew that parish officers were no more effective. In addition, they rejected the suggestion of subdividing parishes and the appointment of officers to enquire into claims (1834 Report:392). Section 3 above has already described those "doctrines" which Chadwick believed had been refuted by the empirical evidence obtained by the Commissioners. The 1834 Report argued that "destitution, not merit, is the only safe ground of relief" (ibid.:392). Chadwick explains this view: "one thing established was that the parish vestry was not a tribunal where moral conduct could be well investigated". Either judgements were made by those who were not a part of the community life and who thereby did not understand the character of the labouring classes and did not witness the claimant in his daily life, or they were made by those within the community and were, therefore, subject to both unfair influence and bias (see Chadwick, 1836:501-2). The Commissioners, then, discounted the hope of basing relief on worth. Only the workhouse test could, they felt, offer any guarantee of success. (80)

Much like Owen and Bentham, then, the Poor Law Commissioners placed their faith in the unswerving application of a principle. It would seem that the Commissioners felt there was nothing to be learned from Chalmers' "emphasis on the necessity to select and train ... visitors". (81)

And yet they were aware of the very obvious loopholes in their scheme.

80. Chadwick writes: "Not only every prevalent doctrine as to the condition of the labouring classes, but every prevalent doctrine as to the measures to be adopted as specifics for the disease of pauperism, were, upon close examination, proved to be unsound" (1836:503).

81. Chalmers^f supervised his scheme in Glasgow only until 1823 and it apparently continued its operation thereafter until 1837.

In the final pages of the 1834 Report, for example, reference is made to the 'waste' and 'mischief' caused by the administration of charitable funds (1834 Report:495-6). "These charities", notes the Report, "in the districts where they abound, may interfere with the efficacy of the measures we have recommended, and on this ground, ... we beg to suggest that they call for the attention of the Legislature" (ibid.:496). Chadwick was less reticent. By 1836, he was claiming the machinery available to the Central Board to be "extremely imperfect". Because of "absurd prejudices and jealousies", the "requisite means" to achieve "the prevention of all but uninsurable cases of pauperism" had been denied to the Commission (1836: 535). What Chadwick wanted were "powers for stopping up indirect sources of pauperism. The jurisdiction of any such authority", he wrote, "should extend over all the means for the relief of indigence, as well as over the main causes of indigence" (ibid.). One of the greatest of these sources of pauperism was "misapplied charity"; another was the inability of the constabulary forces to cope with vagrancy.

It may have been true that what Chadwick and Senior sought "beside economy, was a system of social police which would open up the labour market and render the labour factor of production mobile and docile, that is, disciplined and as nearly rational and predictable as may be" (H.L. Beales in 1948, quoted by Corrigan and Corrigan, 1979:12). What they achieved in the 1834 Act ⁽⁸²⁾ were limited powers: a Commission

82. 4 and 5 William iv, cap.76.

with a life-span limited to five years; the power to issue general rules forty days after having them accepted by a Secretary of State (rules which could later be overridden by the Secretary of State); the power to order a workhouse to be built or enlarged provided a majority of guardians of a union or a majority of ratepayers and owners agreed; the power to order unions of parishes; the power to set the qualifications and supervise the election of guardians and to make rules and regulations for workhouses; the power to set the qualifications and direct the appointment of paid officers who were subject to dismissal by the Commissioners; the power to regulate relief to the able-bodied; the power to call for, and publish, the accounts of trust and charity estates. Persons wilfully disobeying rules, orders and regulations issued by the Commissioners could, on conviction before two justices, forfeit up to £5 for a first offence, up to £20 for a second and be imprisoned for a third offence (see Nicholls, 1904:272-81). The policing of idleness has certain legal conditions of existence. The Poor Law Amendment Act may have been innovative but it placed severe limitations on the scope of the new Central Board. (83)

On the issue of "misapplied charity", Chadwick had hoped for an amendment to the doctrine of cy-près which protected the original intentions of a charitable benefactor, on the creation of a trust, from

83. Speaking to the Prison Bill of 1835, Viscount Hawick suggested to the Commons that it resembled the Poor Law Amendment Act intending, as it did, to leave the detailed administration to local authorities, subject only to supervision and control by a central authority empowered to ensure such duties were efficiently performed. The three Poor Law Commissioners were, however, only entitled to appoint nine Assistant Commissioners without consent of the Treasury.

subsequent amendment. "We should have no right to expect of posterity that our mischievous mistakes should be immortalized", wrote Chadwick (1836:535). Although he was far from alone in this view, the tenacity of the legal conditions of existence of charitable trusts has frustrated reformers up to the present day. In 1853 attempts were made in the Charitable Trusts Bill to empower Charity Commissioners to alter trust purposes but the clause was deleted. (84)

The New Poor Law was designed to rationalise and discipline the distribution of public poor relief. The powers of the Commission, however, effectively left untouched the distribution of private poor relief - both organised (charitable trusts) and casual (eleemosynary relief, seen as a major cause of vagrancy).

6. Summarising Discussion

This chapter has been concerned to explicate the epistemological conditions of existence of welfare discourse within the social formation of the British national economy of the early 19th century. Using Foucault's concept of the Modern episteme, it has been suggested

84. See the Report of the Committee on the Law and Practice Relating to Charitable Trusts (1952). The clause sought the power to amend trusts when: the original charitable purpose had failed; the original purpose was seen to create or increase pauperism or immorality the fund was insufficient to meet the original intention but could, if combined with other charitable funds, achieve the intention (1952: para.92 and footnote). It is, perhaps, an indication of the force of the cultural and political conditions of existence of organised education that, in 1869, the cy-près doctrine was breached for educational trusts (ibid.:para.93). For a discussion of the anomalies arising from the law on charity, see the Charity Law Reform Committee publication Charity Law - Only a New Start Will Do (London, 1975).

that 19th century welfare discourse is characterised by a specific conception of Man. Man is at once the condition of History (the genesis of his individuality and the progress of societies) and its primary mover. This conception had consequences for discourse on the body, on wealth and on language, which formed the matrix for the social sciences and for a science of welfare.

Histories of the developmental kind tend to relate the provision of welfare and social work facilities to the progress of society and the widening of state intervention. It has been suggested that the concept of capitalist relations of production, which defines the national economy of 19th century Britain, implies a certain level of state intervention as part of its conditions of existence. Legal definition and supervision of the ownership and control of the means and conditions of production and distribution, for example, require legislative and executive state activity. Labour sells its power to capital, as a commodity, for money wages. This contract forms part of the conditions of existence of labour and the state is instrumental in forming these legal conditions and in their specific effectivity. As a consequence, state involvement in defining and policing the workforce entails state involvement in the definition and policing of idleness. The form taken by this state involvement (the definition of pauperism; the means of raising money for relief; the means of distributing relief and avoiding fraudulent claims etc.) is not dictated by the concept of capitalist relations of production and its effectivity is not guaranteed by that concept.

Discourse on welfare, in the early part of the 19th century, is a scientific discourse which seeks for the causes of pauperism in historical, cultural and psychological empirical evidence and offers solutions for this aberrant form of behaviour. One noteworthy example of this new science of idleness and welfare is the 1834 Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. The Report illustrates a specific conjunction of knowledge and power in which emphasis is given to knowledge at the level of the individual in order both to objectify the claimant for poor relief and to generalise about the claimant population. That this knowledge-power relation must be understood in terms of capitalist relations of production is emphasised in this chapter: the anarchic nature of the production and distribution of wealth in the form of commodities emphasises reward on the basis of contribution and not need. Idleness (through unemployment, sickness or age) of necessity creates problems within a social formation about the maintenance of those who cannot or will not maintain themselves. But it is also emphasised that this knowledge-power relation cannot be understood simply and crudely as an instrument of coercion and control in the hands of capital. Although, then, Foucault's parameters for his concept of 'discipline' are utilized in this chapter to link epistemological conditions and specific forms, Foucault's emphasis upon the necessarily coercive and homogeneous nature of 'discipline' is rejected.

As a means both of examining this link and of supporting this rejection, this chapter has examined Bentham's panoptic pauper plan and Robert Owen's communitarian socialism. Both can be shown to have the

same basic epistemological conditions: both produce a scientific discourse on labour and welfare. Their shared knowledge-power relation, however, produces different 'solutions' to the problem of idleness in the British national economy. Bentham's plan follows the line drawn by Foucault's portrayal of the application of 'discipline' and represents an endorsement of capitalist relations of production. Paupers are to be provided by capital with the means and conditions of realising their labour power. In this way, Bentham hoped to reinstate the relationship between propertylessness and the need to labour for maintenance which was effectively fractured by the system of poor relief. Even the residuum of society could be made self-sustaining through a knowledge of human functioning and its relationship to cultural norms and the exploitation of that knowledge would provide a scientific basis for rules to counteract the conflicts between individuals' needs and desires. Although Bentham undoubtedly had an influence on many of his contemporaries, his plan was rejected by the government. Its effectivity did not reside simply in its functionality for capitalist relations of production and its rejection does not confirm its lack of functionality in the eyes of those who opposed it. Legislation has many determinants: Bentham was opposed theoretically, pragmatically, politically and ideologically. There are those who maintain a continuity exists between Bentham's ideas and the ideas of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 and after. (85) Certainly, as Poynter maintains,

85. Poynter notes that: "The Amendment Act of 1834 has been described, loosely enough, as a Malthusian or a Benthamite measure" (1969:324). Fraser calls the Act "Part Malthusian, part Benthamite" (1976:1).

"the relationship between opinion, legislation and administration" is "truly complex" (1969:325). What this chapter has sought to emphasise are the common epistemological conditions of existence which Bentham and the framers of the New Poor Law shared.

Owenism can also be shown to have parallels with Foucault's parameters of 'discipline' and yet it gave rise to a plan which offered a critique of capitalist social relations and a blue-print for socialist relations. Owen's plan was not given governmental endorsement, it did, however, result in a number of attempts to create socialist communities and a socialist form of exchange of the products of labour. Owen's science of welfare, though embodying the characteristics of 'discipline', did not imply the coercive separation of labour from the conditions and means of production and distribution: on the contrary, it sought to induce a democratised and socialised economic order. Owenism, however, placed too much reliance upon a scientistic analysis of social change to the almost complete disregard of political conditions of change. For Owenites, change would occur: political action was pointless and potentially retrogressive. Owenism, then, contested "even its own metaphysical impulses". Socialist theory since that time, and particularly since Marx, has endorsed the tendency to "identify knowledge with science".

"It has thereby solved problems of the criteria of appropriateness of action and the means for characterising the situation of action in one and the same operation, knowledge. In its claim to be a science it has been able to eschew questions about the objectives of its practice and the content of its political programme. Both are drawn from the necessities of social development and the realities of the class struggle" (Hirst, 1979:6, speaking of Marxism).

The chapter which follows seeks to highlight those lines of continuity which link the early 19th century scientific discourse on welfare with that "new series of professions" which "assemble under a common banner: social work" (Donzelot, 1980:96). The development of social work within the technical division of labour of the British national economy provides an interesting case study in the analysis of the more general relation between the concept of welfare and that of capitalist relations of production. Both liberal and radical theorists see social work as one form of refinement of the Welfare State, providing social services which, at one level, represent the gains both of 'working class' demands and social progress and, at another level, embody characteristics which are functional to 'capitalism'. For both radical and liberal, social work is immanently critical of 'capitalism': for the latter, social workers are the social conscience of the nation; for the former they are a potential source for the intellectual vanguard of a socialist transformation. Social work, however, is not a homogeneous force for good or evil, for amelioration or revolutionary change. Social work is a practice with legal, cultural, epistemological etc. conditions of existence. Social work is a discursive formation with conditions of existence formed in the matrix of the social sciences and the conception of Man as that "strange empirico-transcendental doublet". Chapters 7 and 8 will examine the consequences of these conditions of existence for the conception of a 'radical social work' and will look at the relevance of social work for socialist theory and political practice.

CHAPTER 6

Social Work Discourse and the Science of Welfare :
Lines of Continuity and Discontinuity

1. Introduction

The two preceding chapters have taken as the broad unit of their analysis the concept of the social formation, along with its specific relations of production. Thus, the British national economy under feudal and capitalist relations of production has been considered. As Cutler and his colleagues emphasise, according discursive primacy to relations of production is not a reaction to their ontological status in the 'real world', it is, rather, a political and ideological decision (1977:315). But, if the discourse of a thesis has political and ideological conditions of existence, it also has as other such conditions the material to which it refers. The two previous chapters have relied upon secondary historical material which has formed the basis for most accounts, whether liberal or radical in orientation, of the so-called development of the Welfare State. The purpose has been to re-present this material, to illustrate the conditions of existence (primarily, the epistemological conditions) of the processes described in these histories and to explore their relevance for an analysis of welfare in terms of relations of production. In thus proceeding, these chapters have treated the material in its chronological order. The concepts of social formation and relations of production in no way suggest historical analysis as a movement through time: the available material about a determinate social formation does. It must be emphasised, however, that whilst a politically relevant analysis cannot

ignore time and space (it is the current situation within which political action works and which supplies political problems) analysis must work within specific concepts (e.g. social formation; capitalist relations of production). In one sense, what is being reiterated is the distinction between concepts and their conditions of existence on the one hand, and the specificity of the forms taken by these concepts and conditions on the other. In another sense, what are being reinforced are earlier disclaimers. This thesis is not another description of the progress/development/evolution/origin of the Welfare State. This chapter, then, will utilize the protocol developed and illustrated in earlier chapters, in a re-analysis of one specific aspect of welfare discourse, social work. It is, one might say, a case study. It should not be necessary, then, to apologise for any neglect of certain events which most historians of the Welfare State, and social policy generally, see as important milestones in, if not the very origins of, the Welfare State. For writers such as Cormack, the Liberal government in the decade before the First World War provided the foundations of the Welfare State. (1) Bruce, on the other hand, maintains that the Welfare State was "inaugurated" in 1948, (2) (Bruce, 1978). But, interesting though these 'milestones' may be, and

1. U. Cormack, "The Welfare State, the formative years, 1905-9" (1953). Fraser, in his The Evolution of the British Welfare State has a section headed "Lloyd George and The Origins of the Welfare State" (1973:144).

2. Handler finds a way of compromising by talking of the foundations of the modern Welfare State as residing in the Second World War (Handler, 1973:Chapter 2).

though their analysis can have important implications for socialist theory and practice, it is suggested that the analysis offered in the previous chapter provides a framework for analysis of welfare discourse set within the British economy and its capitalist relations of production. Analysis of the Liberal reforms and the reforms of the 1940s would therefore, in this thesis, be an expensive luxury. Cutler et al write that the determination of a workforce always has, as a corollary, the determination and regulation of idleness and poverty. Within these terms, "The 'welfare' state reflects a change in policy objectives, not a change in the economic parameters to which policy is directed" (1978:250. Emphasis added.). Rather than providing an examination of the changes in content of these "policy objectives", this chapter will look at social work as one aspect of policy.

Social work, in fact, provides an interesting and important political problem. The advent of a 'radical' social work, informed by socialist and, specifically, Marxist political theory and ideology, raises a series of problems about the potential within the social work profession for effecting socialist forms in Britain and about the nature of 'need' and 'welfare' within a socialist social formation. These are issues which will be pursued in the final chapters, for the moment, the intention is to explore lines of continuity between 19th century practices in 'visiting' the poor and contemporary social work.

2. Lines of Continuity

Social work is a concept with certain conditions of existence. For example, social work in Scotland has specific legal conditions of existence. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to execute the provisions of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968. In pursuit of this duty each Local Authority must appoint a director of social work and adequate numbers of staff to assist the director. These are some of the legal conditions of social work practice in Scotland. Voluntary organisations pursuing similar functions and employing similarly qualified staff have other legal conditions, their status as a charity for example. Other conditions may be cultural or ideological. Most Local Authorities in Scotland, for example, will only employ social workers holding a professional qualification. (3)

In proposing to discuss social work in terms of its relevance as a case study of welfare discourse more generally, this chapter once again works with a realm of concepts which are readily endorsed by liberal and radical theorists alike. Young and Ashton suggest that "The nineteenth century Poor Law, though the aid it gave was public, and it was operated by statutory authority, is of great importance in the history of social work" (1956:43). In an appendix to a discussion paper - Education and Training for Social Work - a "brief chronology of

3. To obtain a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) students must attend a course recognised by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) which is an independent body financed by the state and carrying statutory powers to promote social work education and training and to set standards for such courses. These standards, in their turn, depend on definitions of social work existing within the profession and on the balance of professional and ideological opinion amongst CCETSW members (amongst other things).

social work education and training" begins in 1834 with the Poor Law Amendment Act (CCETSW, 1975). Young, on the other hand, in providing an account of "the origins of probation" acknowledges that his work is "... an excursion into that familiar historical realm which is concerned with explaining how social work grew from diffuse charitable beginnings ..." (1976:44). Shared epistemological conditions of existence of welfare discourses, whether radical or liberal, and the forms they take are to be examined in this chapter as continuities. The discussion is, therefore, linked to the previous chapter and again utilizes the concepts of 'discipline', 'the examination' and 'the social enquiry'.

(i) The Geneses of Individuals and the Making of 'Cases'. The examination, as Foucault has it, "introduces individuality into the field of documentation" (1977:189). At the point of intersection of 'discipline' as "a field of surveillance" and as a 'documentary record' there is a 'case'. A case is a subject objectified: it is both a 'client' and a 'file', an aspect of a knowledge-power relationship.

Towards the end of the 18th century, Thomas Bernard, co-founder of the Society for Bettering the Conditions ... of the Poor, had begun a system of poor relief in Stoke in which careful recording of biographical facts about applicants was combined with a system of what Poynter calls "upper-class visiting" (1969:97). In 1799, in Clapham, the Reverend John Venn established a local branch of the Society for Bettering the Conditions ... of the Poor and divided his parish into eight districts, each with its own visitor to the poor (Poynter, 1969: 98). The social enquiry and the "field of surveillance" were, then,

features of the general practice of examining the applicants for relief which were well established by the time they were criticised as ineffective by the Poor Law Commissioners.

Within the epistemological conditions of the examination, the individual has significance only when considered within a wider context of a system: the home; the family etc. In seeking for the meaning of the signs revealed through the examination, the visitor sought to match relief to need and to ascertain the causes of that need.

Prevention is a primary goal of the science of welfare. Owen, for example, with his belief that Man did not form his own character and should not, therefore, be held accountable for his actions, placed great emphasis upon his scheme's potential for preventing crime and general idleness. (4) The Philanthropic Society expressed this knowledge-power relation, this decussation of relief and control, in succinct terms: the Society sought to "unite the purposes of charity with those of industry and police". (5) The Society, in fact, sought to rehabilitate the children of criminal parents as well as children who

4. "... such has been our education, that we hesitate not to devote years and expend millions in the detection and punishment of crimes, and in the attainment of objects whose ultimate results are, in comparison with this, insignificance itself: and yet we have not moved one step in the true path to prevent crimes ..." (1967:271). There are many liberal and radical theorists today who still search for the causes of crime and, therefore, dream of its prevention. For Lord Scarman, for example, one particular crime (rioting and looting) is to be explained by social and political deprivation. Many radical theorists would agree, although they would describe the causes using the more generic concept of 'capitalism'.

5. Quoted by David Owen from Address to the Public from the Philanthropic Society - 1791 (1965:120). Bentham was on the Society's Committee at this time.

had, themselves, turned to crime (David Owen, 1965:120). Its aims were, then, "both prevention and cure" (Young and Ashton, 1956:163). And the same decussation is illustrated in the very name of the Bath Society for the Supression of Common Vagrants and Impostors, Relief of Occasional Distress, and Encouragement of Industry (1805).

Until the Vagrancy Act of 1824, the statutory basis for the control of vagrancy and mendicity was 17 George II, cap.5 (1744).⁽⁶⁾ In fact, the Act of 1824⁽⁷⁾ largely repeated the classification drawn up in 1744, by categorising offenders as "idle and disorderly", "rogues and vagabonds", or "incorrigible rogues". Nicholls automatically prefaces his discussion of the new Act by suggesting that vagrancy was on the increase and that the new Act "was passed to arrest the growing evil" (1904:196). The penalties under the 1824 Act are, however, less severe than those from 1744.⁽⁸⁾ As a writer named Scott was able to suggest in 1773, "The Vagrancy Act, like many other laws, defeats its own purpose by the severity of its penalties ..." (quoted by Webb and Webb, 1927:375). It is likely, then, that the Act of 1824 acknowledged the reluctance of many magistrates to follow the letter of the law and the difficulty faced by parish authorities in apprehending vagrants whom, we are told, aroused the sympathies of the street crowd (ibid.:371-2). In

6. Discussed in Chapter 4, Section 3 (iii).

7. 5 George IV, cap.83.

8. In 1744, a rogue and vagabond might receive a maximum sentence of six months hard labour whilst an incorrigible rogue could receive up to two years and, should he escape from custody, could be transported for seven years (Nicholls, 1904:36-7). In 1824, the maximum sentence for the rogue and vagabond was three months hard labour and for the incorrigible rogue twelve months (ibid.:196).

effect, the law was being largely by-passed and the common practice was simply to keep vagrants on the move (ibid.:377-8). What we witness is the failure of the "semio-technique" based upon a 'natural history of control'. The "code-individualization link" (Foucault, 1977:99) was no longer to be sought in the natural history 'scientific model of the period' but in the social science 'model'.

As early as 1796, Matthew Martin had begun a social enquiry "into misery in the metropolis" with financial support from the Society for Bettering the Conditions ... of the Poor and from the government (Young and Ashton, 1956:7-8). Martin, who interviewed beggars in London, attracted 'respondents' to his 'research' by offering tickets in exchange for interviews; the tickets entitled the bearer to "... some small assistance. In a matter of seven months he examined about two thousand beggars, together with some six hundred paupers" (David Owen, 1965:110). Owen notes that Martin's early work had little impact on the state but that in 1811 the Home Secretary was persuaded to revive Martin's enquiries. During the period 1811-15 a further four-and-a-half thousand cases were investigated. Colquhoun, a supporter of Martin's work, became a co-founder of the Mendicity Society, "pleading its cause to government and eventually before the Select Committee on Mendicity in 1815-16" (Poynter, 1969:200-1). It seems clear, then, that Martin combined the art of the social enquiry and the charitable relief of the mendicant and that his work had some influence in political circles.

The Mendicity Society, created in 1818, policed the metropolis in the attempt to control begging. With the assistance of eight constables,

"... who roamed the streets in pairs to apprehend beggars and bring them to the Society's office ... or turn them over to the magistrates" (David Owen, 1965:111) the Society dealt with 9,500 vagrants over a fourteen years period. As Owen reports, half of those apprehended were subsequently convicted (ibid.:112). The Society, however, did not merely set out to supplement the constabulary duties of the parish authorities. It also attempted to control indiscriminate alms-giving by the public. The 16th century had witnessed statutory attempts to outlaw alms-giving outside organised relief ⁽⁹⁾ but it is obvious that its deterrent effect was limited. Thus, Young may be correct in saying that the Charity Organisation Society of the 1870s saw indiscriminate alms-giving "as the sole cause of England's social problems" (1976:49) but it is also clear that it had been viewed for a good while as a serious loophole in the policing of idleness. The Mendicity Society sought a solution by encouraging the distribution of relief vouchers in place of cash. Subscribers to the Society were entitled to an unlimited supply of vouchers for distribution whilst others could purchase five for a shilling (David Owen, 1965:112). Paupers presenting vouchers at the Mendicity Society's office were then subjected to investigation and individual classification: to be relieved; to be referred to parish

9. 22 Henry VIII, cap.12 (1530). Any person giving shelter or money to able-bodied beggars was subject to a fine (Nicholls, 1898:118). 27 Henry VIII, cap.25 (1535) empowered parish officials to "take such discreet and convenient order, by gathering and procuring voluntary alms of the good Christian people ... in such good and discreet wise as the poor, impotent, sick, and diseased people ... may be provided ... and relieved ..." It also outlawed the giving of common or open doles and alms otherwise than in the manner prescribed by the Act "upon pain of forfeiting ten times the value of all such money" (Nicholls, 1898:121-2).

authorities for relief; to be refused relief as not being in real need; or to be prosecuted.

The social enquiry and investigatory knowledge were features both of public and private relief organisation. In policing idleness, both sought to control two populations: the deserving poor and the undeserving. The practice involved less a philosophical individualism and more a methodological individualism. It is knowledge of the individual that the enquiry seeks and which constitutes a 'file' but it is the generality of these functions and desires, their normative basis, which constitutes a 'case'. Social enquiry is the method (the file, which describes functions and desires): investigatory knowledge is the theoretical base (the case, in terms of norms and rules). Care must be taken not to presume, however, that we have detected the central core of a homogeneous phenomenon. This is Foucault's error. Social enquiry may usefully be conceived as the common practice of a more general condition called 'discipline' but one must be aware of the specificity of the forms. Social enquiry by parish officials had, as conditions of its practice the statutory basis of the collection and distribution of rates; the cultural and political framework of the parish (voting strength and distribution of ratepayers, for example); economic conditions in the parish and surrounding area; and so on. Social enquiry by charitable organisations had other conditions of existence, amongst which might be noted the statutory basis of the charity and the

political and ideological orientations of those who managed it. (10)

One must also be conscious of the effectivity of social enquiry and investigatory knowledge. In times of high unemployment, for example, investigation of claims was likely to fail under the additional strain. The Mendicity Society's voucher scheme, for example, was often simply boycotted by the indigent and completely broke down during "periods of greatest hardship" (David Owen, 1965:112). It has already been suggested that the workhouse test could not cope with moments of high unemployment.

(ii) The "infinitely small of political power". (11) Foucault describes "the disciplines" as resembling "an infra-law", extending "... the general forms defined by law to the infinitesimal level of individual lives ..." (1977:222). This seems an apt characterisation of the activities of the Charity Organisation Society. Foucault goes on to modify this description, suggesting that "the disciplines" are, rather, "a sort of counter-law". In so doing, he at once over-estimates both the symmetry of relationships establishable by law and the degree of

10. The founders of the Society for Bettering the Conditions ... of the Poor were professional men and evangelicals and were as likely to offer a conservative condemnation of capitalist development for the misery it caused as they were to condemn the poor for their idle ways. The Mendicity Society, which numbered amongst its board of management David Ricardo and William Allen, a Quaker business associate of Robert Owen and Bentham and founder of the journal The Philanthropist, was likely to come under a more non-conformist and radical form of influence.

11. Foucault (1977:214).

asymmetry establishable between social agents. (12) Foucault never really gets to the point of saying who it is who gains from this counter-law and who loses, except tautologically as those who have power and those who do not.

The Charity Organisation Society (COS) endorsed the principles on which the New Poor Law was based: the pauper probably only had himself to blame for his predicament; if relief was too easily obtainable human nature would attract labour away from fruitful employment and onto public or private relief; relief should be based upon a scientific calculation of need and should seek to encourage self-help and independence. As the Poor Law Commissioners noted with concern, the unscientific distribution of charitable gifts undermined the principle of less-eligibility and its mechanism - the workhouse test. The COS was very much concerned to control this loophole. As a consequence, radical theorists have been largely concerned to establish that the COS was yet one more aspect of the 'bourgeoisie's' control over the 'working class', 'in the interest of capital'. According to Fido, 'character' determined whether an applicant was assisted by the COS.

12. 'Discipline' as counter-law "... creates between individuals a 'private' link, [which] ... may be underwritten by contract; the way in which it is imposed, the mechanisms it brings into play, the non-reversible subordination of one group of people by another, the 'surplus' power that is always fixed on the same side, the inequality of position of the different 'partners' in relation to the common regulation, all these distinguish the disciplinary link from the contractual link, and make it possible to distort the contractual link systematically from the moment it has as its content a mechanism of discipline" (1977:222-3).

"The ideal of character was related to those attributes which ensure the smooth operation of market forces in an industrialised economy. Thus the value of economic independence, foresight, self-control and sustained effort were stressed" (Fido, 1977:222).

If one might presume that the juxtaposition of "market" and "industrialised" suggests that Fido is talking of capitalist relations of production, it is not at all clear why "foresight, self-control and sustained effort" are 'character traits' desirable under 'capitalism' alone. It is in emphasising economic independent that the COS can be seen to endorse capitalist relations of production. Most persons during their life time were in the position to sell their labour and should so organise their spending as to save for sickness, unemployment and old age. (13) Loch, secretary to the COS from 1875 to 1913, noted of the individual that:

"If he cease to originate and produce, he must as a rule succumb, unless someone makes good to him the deficiency that results from his barrenness of production. In that case he is, socially speaking, a slave, a bad economic bargain. To shift the responsibility of maintenance from the individual to the state is to sterilise the productive power of the community as a whole ..." (Loch, in 1895, quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:33).

By placing emphasis upon economic self-reliance, the COS endorsed the relationship between labour and capital as one in which the direct

13. Writing of Charles Loch, secretary to the COS, his grandson notes that Loch was prepared to admit that pauperism had causes other than indiscriminate charity: "weakness of character or vice; sickness, poor health, lack of work and incompetence; inability to make provision against old age. But character is the important thing". And quoting Loch, he notes, "By self-maintenance is meant self-support throughout life in its ordinary contingencies - sickness, widowhood, old age etc." (Mowat, 1961:69).

producers, as economic agents, are effectively separated from the means and conditions of production (are propertyless) and sell their labour power, as a commodity, for wages. There is no room within the COS ideology for any consideration of the meeting of need divorced from the ability to contribute. The relationship between the individual and the satisfaction of his needs and desires is a commodity relationship. The COS, in fact, offered a direct and consistent opposition to what were seen as 'socialist' demands for state provision in the realms of income maintenance and general welfare (Mowat, 1961:passim).

The Charity Organisation Society began life under the more explicit title of the Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity ⁽¹⁴⁾ and, at its first meeting in 1870, Lord Derby declared that the multitude of London charities "... should be made to co-operate instead of competing, and ... should be brought into co-operation with the agents through whom the Poor Law is administered" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:28). Some measure of success was probably achieved in the latter aim in the sense that, as Fido suggests (1977:213-4), members of COS district committees were often also Poor Law guardians. But the suggestion for co-operation between charitable organisation and the state system of relief had also been made in 1869 by the Poor Law

14. Rose suggests the COS began life as the London Association for the Prevention of Pauperism and Crime, in 1868 (1971:224). Mowat provides a brief review of 'origins' (1961:14-18). The important point to note, however, is the level of concern about indiscriminate charity in the years prior to the foundation of the COS. In 1864, for example, the Select Committee on Poor Relief had strongly criticised indiscriminate charity from voluntary organisations (Rose, 1971:223).

Board. The so-called Goschen Minute, which was issued to guardians in London, attempted to demarcate the separate realms of public and private relief. (15) The Poor Laws were to be used for those who were actually destitute. Charity should attempt to prevent such destitution by supplementing wages; providing material goods such as clothing and bedding; and assisting in ways legally prohibited within the Poor Laws such as the purchase of tools (Young and Ashton, 1956: 58,96). The Minute also recommended that a "public registering office" should be set up in every district to co-ordinate the activities of the various relieving agencies; that charitable agencies should not assist those being relieved by the Poor Laws; and should report on those, assisted through charitable funds, to the relieving officer (Mowat, 1961:22). The Goschen Minute is the Central Board's acknowledgement that the state could not monopolise the relief of the poor as the principle of the workhouse test demanded. If the Poor Law Board could not extend its jurisdiction to cover supervision of private charity, as Chadwick had dreamed, it could seek to exert influence over it. In Scotland, where relief to the able-bodied was, legally though not in practice, forbidden there had generally been a greater acknowledgement of the role of charity. The Local Government Board of Scotland issued a Minute in December 1878 carrying advice on the administration of charity to the able-bodied. First, "a strict enquiry

15. "... it appears to be a matter of essential importance that an attempt should be made to bring the authorities administering the Poor Laws and those who administer charitable funds to as clear an understanding as possible, so as to avoid the double distribution of relief to the same persons, and at the same time to secure that the most effective use¹ should be made of the large sums habitually contributed by the public towards relieving such cases as the Poor Law can scarcely reach" (Reproduced in Rose, 1971:226).

into ... previous history and present circumstances" should be conducted. Secondly, funds should be refused to a person "on strike, or who declines ... employment at wages sufficient to maintain him ..." and to someone in receipt of relief from another source, or from begging. Thirdly, assistance should only be granted in return for "an equivalent in labour ..." and, where no work can be offered "an artificial labour test" was to be applied. Finally, relief should not be given "in money, but solely in rations, coals" etc. Such rules, it was felt, would discourage "idleness and imposture" (The Local Government Board for Scotland, 1897:94-7). In the following year (October 1879), the Board found it necessary to refer again to the Minute of 1878 and to emphasise that it was only in those cases in which its "essential principles" had been ignored that problems had arisen. It was, therefore "earnestly" urged that in those instances in which Parochial Authorities and charities were to co-operate, applicants should be referred to the Parochial Authority. The Board, however, adopted a much more dictatorial tone than in the earlier Minute by insisting that "... no applicant shall, under any circumstances, be relieved by the administrators of the Relief Fund except on the recommendation of the Parochial Authority". In its turn the Parochial Authority was to conduct a "thorough investigation", to be paid for out

of the fund raised (*ibid.*:97). (16)

The modus operandi of the nascent Charity Organisation Society is outlined in the first report of the Council of COS (1870). Mowat provides summary details. In each Poor Law division, a Charity Office was to be established and was to be in direct communication with the local relieving officer, the clergy and all charities operating in the area. The Society's charity agent was to maintain a register of persons given charitable relief and was to "inquire into and investigate, and, if necessary, in the last resort, assist ... such special cases as cannot be met by existing agencies ..." (quoted by Mowat, 1961:21). It was also intended that printed tickets be issued for the benevolent to distribute in place of cash. As Mowat records, the ideal of co-ordination was never achieved and formal co-operation between relieving officers and COS district committees seems to have occurred only once

16. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 applied, of course, only to England and Wales. The legal suppression of indolence and the relief of the impotent poor in Scotland has been chronicled by Sir George Nicholls (History of Scotch Poor Law, 1856) and Ferguson (1948:166-221) provides a brief outline up to 1863. Nicholls records, in a footnote in his study of the English Poor Law: "In Scotland, down to 1579, there was little difference in principle from the practice pursued in this country ... Thenceforward, however, the two systems tended to diverge ... The Scotch Law permitted ... the raising of money by compulsory assessment, but only if voluntary contributions should be insufficient ..." (1898:8). As Nicholls says, the collection and distribution of funds was administered by a "quasi-ecclesiastical machinery" (*ibid.*:9). No major amendment to that system was made until 1845, following a Commission report reviewing the system. The Act created a Board of Supervision, and parochial boards who were to prepare rolls of the poor. The building of "poorhouses" was encouraged for the relief of the poor. In time, these poorhouses were seen as a means of 'testing' the destitution of applicants "whose disability, or the extent of whose disability was doubtful and believed to be pretended or exaggerated" (Ferguson, 1948:211). By 1877, Skelton was claiming "That a judicious but firm and vigilant use of the poorhouse test has a marked effect in diminishing the amount of pauperism in a district" (1877:46).

under the direction of Octavia Hill in Marylebone (Mowat, 1961:23). The COS was, then, constrained to enter the field as yet another charitable organisation and to seek to influence the welfare realm through example and exhortation. "It is desirable", notes the annual report for 1875, "that it should be distinctly understood that it is the chief aim of the Society to deal with the causes of pauperism rather than with its effects ..." (Mowat, 1961:26).

A welfare organisation such as the COS must, then, be considered in terms of the ideological and cultural conditions of its existence: the political and social aims of those who founded the organisation and those who conducted its daily operations, but also the political and social aims of those in other welfare organisations who jealously guarded their own autonomy from COS interference (Young and Ashton, 1956: 110). There are ideals and there are practical exigencies. The Charity Organisation Society exerted a great deal of influence on 'public opinion'. Gilbert has remarked that "At least until the end of the eighties, the most influential determinant of serious English middle-class opinion about the care of the poor was ... the Charity Organisation Society" (1973:51). And yet, as many commentators record, by the end of the 19th century, COS opposition to state welfare provision was reactionary (Young and Ashton, 1956:112; Mowat, 1961:126 et seq.). The Charity Organisation Society did, however, also exert a great deal of influence in terms of its social work practice of social investigation. It was in its emphasis upon detailed examination of the background to every claim for relief and the careful recording of such investigatory knowledge by trained workers, that the COS had a lasting influence.

The investigation constituted a scientific collation and analysis of the "infinitely small". (17) But the investigation also worked within a political realm. The point of contact may have been the individual, but it was the individual as a worker and as a member of a family. It was also the individual as a member of an economic class and of a community and nation. By 1909, Urwick was expressing this perspective, in what he described as sociological terms, to the inaugural meeting of the School of Social Economics:

"We believe that we have reached a deeper view of social relationships, and all that they imply. Society is no longer for us a collection of individuals grouped together for mutual defence into an aggregate with just enough form and structure to hang together, and to ensure to each member the fullest freedom to seek his own ends. It is seen to be an organic growth ... More and more our conscious aim is now to increase the solidarity and cohesion of this social organism, and, for the individual members of it to give greater content and greater variety to the life which each may live within it" (Urwick, 1909:258-9).

The knowledge-power relation of welfare discourse combined notions of the geneses of individuals and of the progress of societies. The normative and regulative formulation of individual functions, desires and conduct was set within an interpretative framework which gave meaning to the "infinitely small" in terms of its significance for systems and processes. The inadequate form of social investigation

17. The Council of the COS recommended district committees to record all investigations on a 'visiting form'. Each case should be assigned a number and recorded in a 'Record Book'. A 'Decision Book' was also suggested. The COS also published manuals such as Suggestions for Systematic Inquiry into the Cases of Applicants for Relief, and Visitors' Handy-Book (Mowat, 1961:29-30).

devised by the Poor Law Commissioners - the workhouse test - was being supplemented and replaced by a refined process of enquiry which acknowledged the fact that if idleness was to be effectively policed the claimant had to be understood within the context of his own peculiar environment. The COS, then, combined the use of voluntary workers with paid officials - "Collectors, Enquirers, Inquiry Agents" - who were often, Mowat maintains, "men of the working class" (1961:27-8). The investigation of a claim for assistance involved extensive enquiry amongst neighbours, shopkeepers and employers. The home would be visited, perhaps on a number of occasions, and the worker assigned to the claim would 'follow through' the case until its successful closure (Young and Ashton, 1956:104). There can be little doubt that for many who involved themselves in organisations inaugurated for the relief and the improvement of the poor, philanthropic motivations were not easily to be separated from desires to avoid civil disturbance and revolution. Woodroffe quotes from one writer on 'charity organisation' who, in 1870, noted that charity "... has its material or political uses ... A more kindly sentiment grows up which insensibly leavens the intercourse of classes, and softens, if it does not prevent, the threatened collision between them" (1974:51).⁽¹⁸⁾ The knowledge-power relation endorsed by such writers implied the negotiation of a peaceful co-

18. As late as 1927, the COS was claiming that "the only real antidote to Bolshevism is good casework" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:55).

existence rather than the enforcement of 'apartheid'. (19) It is evident in the work of Octavia Hill and in the notion of the Settlement. Both Hill and Canon Barnett, who established the first Settlement (Toynbee Hall) in 1884, were intimately connected with the COS, of course. Hill's work took her directly into the poorer communities and into the homes of the 'working class'. Though she sought improvements in the physical environment of 'working class' housing areas her primary targets were the tenants: "Transplant them tomorrow to healthy and commodious houses and they will pollute them and destroy them", she wrote in 1884 (quoted by Jones, 1978:13). Barnett was quite specific about his fears that rich and poor were dangerously alienated. The Settlement was one way in which the 'rich' could seek to influence a poor and deprived area whilst also making them more aware of the life of the 'working classes' (Young and Ashton, 1956:223-34; Woodroffe, 1974: 64-74).

For the liberal theorist, the Charity Organisation Society, Octavia Hill and Toynbee Hall are all stepping-stones in a 'Whiggish' view of history which casts charitable endeavour "... as a mechanism whereby the

19. Octavia Hill records how, in 1877, she had felt obliged to remind an audience of clergy and local visitors not to think of the poor as a race apart: "... if we thought of the poor primarily as husbands, wives, sons and daughters, members of households, as we are ourselves, instead of contemplating them as a different class, we should recognise better how the house training and high ideal of home duty was our best preparation for work among them" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:49). Despite such a sentiment, however, the COS was ideologically and intellectually committed to viewing the life of the labourer as inevitably precarious. In 1876, in fact, the COS had made a point of publicising the views of one of its district committees, which had offered the labourer the consolation of knowing that "... those who are born to easier circumstances sympathise with the severe toil and self-denial which his lot imposes upon him ..." (Mowat, 1961:42-3; Fraser, 1973:249-50).

progressive, developmental forces in English society could be extended to a population - the working class - that did not so readily share in them" (Young, 1976:51). For the radical theorist, welfare discourse of the late 19th century represents "... the perfection of the techniques of mass surveillance of the working population ... through the use of increasingly sophisticated techniques of data-gathering incorporating the welfare institutions ..." (Lea, 1979:87). What this thesis suggests is that the concept of welfare discourse is the result of many determinations. The needs of the individual within capitalist relations are met through the purchase of commodities. Those without wealth who cannot sell their labour-power, or have none to sell, must be maintained through a redistribution of wealth. Given the acceptance that some such redistribution must occur (for reasons of philanthropy but also because capitalist relations of production have, as concomitants, structural unemployment and a wage system realised through political struggle between capital and labour which make even a basic planned subsistence over time exceedingly precarious) there arise inevitable consequences such as the fraudulent claiming of such relief and interference with the labour market. Capitalist relations of production have, then, as a condition of their existence a welfare discourse which is a discourse about the policing of idleness. It has to be emphasised that this is not another way of saying that 'capitalism' required a ready, willing and healthy workforce and Chadwick, Hill and Barnett provided it. Welfare discourse is not dictated, even in the 'final analysis', by the needs of 'capitalism'. The work of the COS, Hill and Barnett did not contribute, without

remainder, to the maintenance of capitalist relations of production. The present analysis of welfare discourse utilizes the parameters of Foucault's concept of 'discipline'. The epistemological conditions of existence of welfare discourse, and the form taken by these conditions within the matrix of the social sciences, suggest important lines of continuity running from the early 19th century. The present and previous sub-sections have attempted to explicate some of the features of this welfare 'discipline' and later sections will pick up again these lines of continuity in an examination of social work in Britain in the 20th century. For the moment, reinforcement will be given to the conception of welfare discourse as a discursive regularity which should be considered in terms of its specificity. Though welfare discourse lends itself to an analysis in terms of Foucault's 'disciplinary power', this in no way suggests that welfare discourse is simply one aspect of a homogeneous and omnipotent machinery of social control. The 'history' of welfare and social work has discontinuities which serve to fracture any such suggestion.

3. Lines of Discontinuity

For both liberal and radical theorists of the development of British social work, there is general agreement over the important milestones of that process. Young and Ashton (1956:113-4), Woodroffe (1974:47) and the much more radical Chris Jones (1978:67) all agree that the Charity Organisation Society laid the foundation stone of contemporary social

work. (20) The Settlement movement is acknowledged as an important early contribution to 'group work' (Young and Ashton, 1956:223-34; Woodroffe, 1974:64) and social work (Parry and Parry, 1979:24) and similar agreement is apparent over the 'origins' of that other companion pursuit - 'community work' (Woodroffe, 1974:56; D. Jones, 1977:166-7; Briscoe, 1977:182). Throughout these various histories, Friendly Societies are referred to as being of relevance in the process of welfarism, although the references are occasionally merely gestural. Woodroffe's only indexed reference is to mention that Friendly Societies, among many other "groups", "foreshadowed" group work; Young and Ashton apologise for neglecting the "great deal of personal social work" which the Societies must have done but note that records of such work could not be found (1956:2). For others, the Friendly Society represented both the desire and ability of the 'working class' to 'help themselves' and a medium of incorporation of the so-called labour aristocracy into the mainstream of 'bourgeois' hegemony (Gray, 1977; Hearn, 1978).

(i) The Case of the Friendly Societies

"... as a dynamically expanding system, industrial capitalism is obliged to encourage amongst its workers the greatest possible cooperation. Its incentives must be sufficiently powerful to develop, as far as possible, a general support of the system as a whole, and this involves acceptance of the acquisitive motives of capitalism. Each industrial enterprise and industrial capitalism as a whole have therefore to assist the workers to respond positively to the material inducements and

20. Woodroffe's agreement with Young and Ashton suggests she took more than a lead from their pioneering, historical account; compare, for example, Woodroffe (1974:47) with Young and Ashton (1956:113-4).

incentives they have to offer, and they have to try to win, if not the political confidence, then at least the political neutrality of their working class" (Saville, "The Welfare State: an historical approach", 1957/8:7).

In this passage, Saville effectively summarises what is central to many radical theses of the development of the Welfare State, social policy and social work: the gradual incorporation/deradicalisation of the 'working class'; 'bourgeois' hegemony; one-dimensional society. Given, it is argued, the fundamental contradiction within 'capitalism' - the private ownership of the means of production and the socialised forces of production - it is necessary for capital to 'depoliticise' the working class through "the systematic blockage of the capacities found in culture and consciousness ..." (Hearn, 1978:8). Gray's interpretation is more complex: "... the reproduction of dominant values rested on a more subtle process of negotiated re-definition, in which the conditional independence of working-class institutions came to be recognised" (1977:87). However, although the 'bourgeoisie' did not have it all its own way (ibid.:88), the effect is broadly the same because the 'bourgeoisie' "constituted the hegemonic fraction within the power bloc - that whose interests preponderate ..." (ibid.:77). Whilst, then, Gray attempts to tackle the complexity of the social and technical division of labour and the relations between these groupings, he is too inclined, ultimately, to reduce the issue to a two-class contest. Consequently, for Gray, institutions such as Friendly Societies represented the 'working class'. Containment and control of such institutions was, therefore, containment and control of 'class

consciousness' (ibid.:87).

As Hanson says, apart from private charity and public relief, "... the principal agents for the provision of welfare in Britain before 1908 were the friendly societies" (1972:118). And yet "they have not been greatly studied" (Yeo, 1979:51). A glance at the bibliography in one of the few of such studies, Gosden's The Friendly Societies in England, 1815 - 1875 (1961), confirms this: it also illustrates the degree of interest engendered by Friendly Societies in the early 19th century. (21) As Poynter suggests, much of this interest arose from the hope that "the poor could preserve themselves from indigence by their own frugality and foresight" (1969:35).

The first general piece of legislation concerning the Friendly Society did not appear until 1793 (Gosden, 1961:5). 33 George III, cap.54, "For the Encouragement and Relief of Friendly Societies" (Nicholls, 1904:110), acknowledged the private and public benefits arising from the principles of the Friendly Society and, in effect, gave statutory blessing to the development and registration of such Societies. It is understandable that the 'purpose' of the Act was often misunderstood (Poynter, 1969:38) and resented. Registration was not compulsory and, two years later 35 George III, cap.111, in effect,

21. Among some of the works cited by Gosden one might note: C. Ansell, A Treatise on Friendly Societies in which the Doctrine of Interest of Money and the Doctrine of Probability are practically applied (1835); J.T. Becher, The Constitution of Friendly Societies upon legal and scientific principles ... (1824); E. Chadwick, An Essay on the Means of Insurance against the Casualties of Sickness, Decrepitude and Mortality (1836); S. Clapham, Friendly Societies substitutes for Parochial Assessments - a sermon (1810). Gosden's work provides a thorough and relatively recent history of the Friendly Society but ends, effectively, in 1875. Beveridge (1949) provides a detailed history up to 1948 and includes some discussion of Building Societies which must also be registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

extended an invitation to register to those Societies "which have inadvertently omitted to take the benefit of the ... Act".

Registration carried with it two main benefits: the legal protection of funds and exemption from 'removal' for members (Nicholls, 1904:111; Thompson, 1977:460). It is generally accepted, however, that a large number of Societies declined to register (Thompson, 1977:460), preferring to maintain control and autonomy over their own dealings. With the passing of the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, outlawed trade unions and political organisations utilized the exemption given to Friendly Societies as 'covers' for their continuing activities (Hearn, 1978:121; Thompson, 1977:199) and, consequently, those who had formerly regarded the Societies with paternalistic pleasure began to express reservations (Woodroffe, 1974:63). This is not, however, sufficient reason to suggest that Friendly Societies represented 'working class' radicalism. Friendly Societies must be considered in terms of their conditions of existence.

Friendly Societies, considered as 'benefit societies' or 'box clubs', imply a body of subscribers combining to insure against needs which will not be met out of available income or capital. Prior to the protection afforded by the 1793 Act, money invested in Friendly Societies was protected by informal networks of trust and control and, as such, would tend to be confined to specific geographic areas (villages; districts) or specific occupations (a trade; a factory). (22) Those

22. "In 1815 virtually all friendly societies were local in their organisation ..." (Gosden, 1961:17). "... the local societies can be divided into two broad groups, those whose members followed the same occupation and those with a mixed membership" (ibid.:71).

who were wealthy enough could purchase annuities for their old age or for their children (Poynter, 1969:36), Friendly Societies were, consequently, confined to small tradesmen, labourers and artisans (Thompson, 1977:458,460). The need to ensure security of the funds and a disciplined membership (to pay subscriptions regularly; to make only legitimate claims on funds) tended to lead to a secrecy of governance and a degree of self control which richer and more secure members of the community often looked upon with trepidation. If Friendly Societies were not being attacked for their radical potential they often came under criticism for their pauperising traditions. (23) One could hardly take exception to Thompson's view that the Friendly Society of the early 19th century presents us with "authentic evidence of the growth of independent working-class culture and institutions" (1977:460-1). Thompson, however, also wants to argue that the Friendly Society movement contributed to "the growth in working-class consciousness" (ibid.:462).

A 'working class' is not 'made', nor does it 'make' itself. Friendly Societies may well have provided a medium in some places for the expression of common feelings of identity amongst direct producers against capital but such Societies should not be examined in terms of their reflection or representation of a 'working class consciousness'. They must be studied in terms of their own specificity. To reflect

23. Gosden provides the following quotation from the Board of Agriculture's General View of the Agriculture of ... Essex (1793): "... benefit clubs, holden at public houses, increase the number of those houses, and naturally lead to idleness and intemperance; that they afford commodious opportunities to foment sedition, and form illegal combinations ... there is not the smallest probability in their general extensive application, that they ever have, or ever will diminish our poor rates but just the contrary ..." (1961:3).

a cultural identity, a degree of self-help and mutuality or collectivist values (Thompson, 1977:462-3), is not to reflect a 'working class consciousness'. To build a thesis about opposition to capitalist relations of production in terms of the cumulative power of a variety of institutional and cultural reflections of 'working class consciousness', is simply to pave the way for an analysis of the failure of this opposition in terms of the gradual and compartmental 'incorporation' of these institutions and cultures.

Eden, in his Observations on Friendly Societies (1801), noted that some 5,117 Societies had registered themselves under the terms of the 1793 Act and he estimated that there were around 2,000 unregistered clubs (and see Gosden, 1961:4 and Poynter, 1969:38). Although there was a relatively large number of unregistered clubs and although Eden was of the opinion that the "real object" of any association should be ascertained and its progress "vigilantly watched" (quoted by Gosden, 1961:157), it is noteworthy that Eden believed that the majority of clubs had registered. The Combination Acts remained in force until 1824/5 and it is understandable that during this period "there was considerable fear that friendly societies were revolutionary" (Gosden, 1961:156). As Gosden goes on to record, even as late as 1848 a Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to enquire into the conditions necessary for the registration of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, could record in its Report: "... it is clear that an affiliated body with such resources at its command must become highly dangerous if it should ever be turned from its legitimate objects" (ibid.:159). The "legitimate objects" were, however, highly

regarded and whilst one may see in legislation an increasing degree of state control of Friendly Societies, the 'discipline' involved was directed as much or more towards the economic viability of the Societies as to their political control.

The Act of 1793 required the rules and regulations of Societies wishing to register to be lodged with the quarter sessions for approval by the justices. No doubt one can view this within the wider picture of popular unrest and disturbance around the years 1792-6 (Thompson, 1977:111 et seq.). Nevertheless, registration was not compulsory and any Society exacting seditious oaths from its members was unlikely to publish them and pass them on to the quarter sessions. The next major piece of legislation on Friendly Societies was 59 George III, cap.128 (1819) which required registered Societies to submit their tables of contributions and benefits for approval by magistrates. (24) From that time, legislation, and state concern generally, centred on the economic viability of the Societies. (25)

Friendly Societies, based on a small geographical area, remained popular throughout the 19th century. They provided some measure of financial security for local labour during periods of illness and avoided for many the stigma of a pauper's funeral. It is estimated that in

24. The justices were to seek the approval of the tables from "two persons at the least, known to be professional actuaries or persons skilled in calculation" (quoted by Gosden, 1961:179).

25. Gosden notes that the Commons Select Committee on the Laws respecting Friendly Societies (1825) devoted most of its attention to discussion of the issue of the financial solvency of the Societies (1961:176). In 1827 a second Select Committee concluded that the necessary information for actuarial calculation was incomplete. 10 George IV, cap.56 (1829) accordingly ordered registered Societies to send quinquennial returns of sickness and mortality to the government (ibid.:177).

1815 there was something less than one million members of such clubs and that by the 1870s they were still one of the most popular forms of Friendly Society (Gosden, 1961:17). Local Societies often declined to register. Their convivial activities (meetings in public houses; feast days) which were important events in their members' lives and attracted members and subscriptions, were not allowed under Friendly Society legislation and, in addition, funds might often be used for purposes not originally intended (e.g. to finance a strike). In such circumstances, members valued the degree of personal control they had over their Society and were not happy to see this eroded by interference from the state (Gosden, 1961:18). However, unregistered local Societies were vulnerable to the possibility of having their funds misappropriated and all small Societies suffered from the tendency to have insufficient funds to meet the needs of members. As a consequence, small Societies often ended in insolvency. When this happened, older contributors (usually those over 40) were totally unprotected for the future because many Societies would not accept new members of this age. In addition, local, small Societies were inappropriate for a mobile labour force because rights could not be transferred from one Society to another. Given the economic and legal conditions of existence of these Societies, (26) autonomy and popular management often proved to be a dead letter. It is these conditions of existence which help to explain the growth in popularity of other

26. The commodity form necessitates insurance against moments of personal or familial crisis (sickness; unemployment; old age) and requires actuarial calculation of contributions and benefits. Non-registration removed funds from legal protection.

forms of Friendly Society.

Alongside the local Societies in the 1870s, the most popular Friendly Society form were the Affiliated Orders. The 3¹/₄ largest Orders had over 1,200,000 members by 1872 but were dominated by the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity with 426,663 members and the Ancient Order of Foresters with 388,872 (Gosden, 1961:26). What these Orders attempted was to combine the benefits of local and democratic control (the lodge) and the benefits to be derived from affiliation. (27) Manchester Unity Lodges, for example, maintained control over sick funds and management but contributed to a centralised burial fund. Each lodge elected representatives for district committees and delegates from these committees formed an Annual Moveable Committee. Members of this Committee elected a Board of Directors. This hierarchy also represented the Union's appeals machinery for aggrieved members. The Foresters had a similar democratic machinery but, additionally, had no permanent headquarters, the 'seat of government' being moved each year.

A large membership provided a degree of financial security for the Affiliated Orders which they did not always obtain under the law. (28) Both the Manchester Unity and the Foresters issued members who required them with a statement showing them to be 'in benefit'. Members could then practice 'tramping' (travelling from town to town in search of work) and be assured of support at brother lodges throughout the country.

27. Yeo describes this as "the contradictory goods of democratic branch autonomy with centralised scale and administrative/financial back-up" (1979:51).

28. It was not until 1850 that branches (lodges) were allowed to register and not until 1875 that Affiliated Orders could register as such.

In addition, a member moving to another area could either transfer entitlement to another lodge or could arrange payments to and from the original lodge (Gosden, 1961:76-7).

G.D.H. Cole, in his Short History of the British Working Class Movement, noted that unions, Friendly Societies and the co-operatives "... were carried on under conditions which forbade access to the poorer strata among the workers. Trade Union contributions were too high. Friendly Societies demanded an exercise of 'thrift' which was beyond the reach of the less skilled operatives; the Cooperative Society called for cash from men and women who were compelled to buy on credit if they were to live at all" (quoted by Hearn, 1978:173). It is apparent from the continued calls on the Poor Laws (29) that self-help organisations could not cope with the variety or the volume of all needs. Amongst the poorer paid workers, and particularly in agricultural areas, local Societies continued to meet some of the minimum needs of members. The Manchester Unity and the Foresters, however, began in the industrial areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire and attracted better paid members. (30) By exacting larger contributions the Affiliated Orders were able to pay larger sickness benefits (Gosden, 1961: 76,78). But the fact that the Affiliated Orders were associated rather more with what has been called a 'labour aristocracy' than with a

29. In 1891, according to Hanson, there were 4.2 million members of registered Friendly Societies: in 1892, 744,757 claims to poor relief (1972:121,116).

30. Agricultural labour did not require some of the 'benefits' that the larger Societies could provide however; for example, the transfer of entitlement or other facilities for a more mobile occupation.

grass-roots labour movement is part of a wider consolidation of the security of specific trades and occupations during the 19th century. (31) Alongside the Affiliated Orders, but far less popular, were Friendly Societies which acted very much as insurance companies. Often with their headquarters in London, these Societies were controlled by management committees which reported to annual general meetings. It was argued, notes Gosden, that such a procedure was cheaper to run than systems based upon popular control and it tended to appeal to those "of a higher degree of respectability, artisans, tradesmen, domestic servants ... who ... dislike the nonsense and mixed company of the club nights and look for an investment of their savings on purely business principles" (Sir George Young, Assistant Commissioner to the Royal Commission on Friendly Societies, 1871-4, quoted by Gosden 1961:50-1). These Societies, such as the Hearts of Oak with a membership in 1872 of 32,837, would allow subscriptions only from the better paid and specifically excluded dangerous-occupation groups.

By the 1870s there was also a separate group of Societies known as burial societies. The two largest in 1875 were the Royal Liver Friendly Society with 600,000 members and the Liverpool Victoria Legal Society with

31. This is what Lea describes as the 'monetization' of the class struggle (1979:86-7). For many radical theorists such as Lea, Giddens (1973:114,158) and Habermas (1976:21), the 'fundamental contradiction' between labour and capital is 'depoliticised' and 'routinised' through the wage bargaining process in which trade unions guarantee to conventionalise conflict in return for stability of employment and wages. It is not necessary, however, to view this process in terms of the incorporation and deradicalisation of the 'working class'. The direct producers under capitalist relations of production are not inherently radical or revolutionary and they do not embody a homogeneity of purpose which allows one to describe the position of a 'labour aristocracy' as a 'sell-out' to the 'working class'.

200,000. Most burial societies were based in Liverpool, collected subscriptions from house to house and spent a large proportion of their income (up to 40%) on management expenses (Gosden, 1961:58-9). What we see, then, is a change in form in the Friendly Society movement during the 19th century away from local and democratically controlled mutual aid clubs and towards the large, centralised insurance company model. The Manchester Unity suffered a rift in the 1840s when the central authority attempted to tighten control over the subscriptions and benefits of affiliated lodges (Gosden, 1961:28). Central control within the Foresters was less certain but, as a consequence, it was felt that the business efficiency of the Order suffered (ibid.:37).

It seems clear, then, that the kinds of demands placed on the funds of Societies, particularly in industrial areas, required a centralised management and a degree of actuarial calculation which were not particularly conducive to the older ideals of the local clubs. Some lodges of the Affiliated Orders, for example, began to refuse membership to miners and railway workers because, as an occupational group, each made above average demands on funds (Gosden, 1961:83-7). It is also noticeable that the management of the Manchester Unity and the Foresters was dominated by professional and self-employed men (ibid.:88-93). This is not to argue that they were taken over by the petite bourgeoisie but rather to note that the scale of organisation and demands of posts required educated leaders who could arrange their time with a degree of flexibility not often open to employees.

Friendly Societies describe a trajectory which does not fit well with standard liberal and radical histories of the Welfare State. Despite the

reluctant praise of the Royal Commission of 1834 for their degree of disciplinary control and their adoption of social enquiry, Friendly Societies do not form a line of continuity with 19th and 20th century social work practice. Primarily sickness and burial clubs, Friendly Societies required merely a confirmation of actual inability to work (a requirement met by the doctor's certificate for most Societies towards the end of the 19th century) or of death. The science of statistical probability rather than the science of Man and Society formed the basis of calculation within the knowledge-power relation developed by Friendly Societies. Despite the competition of finance capital in the form of the insurance company (by the end of 1886, the Prudential Assurance Company had 7,111,828 industrial assurance policies in force; Gosden, 1961:215-6), the Friendly Society was not entirely engulfed, membership in 1970 being 4.8 million according to Hanson (1972:137). (32) Neither, however, did the Friendly Society entirely merge with, and disappear into, state benefit schemes. (33) As advocates of 'national insurance' towards the end of the 19th century recognised, Friendly Societies did not meet the needs of those whose income was too small to meet regular contributions, or who lost all rights to relief on falling behind with payments. In addition, increasing longevity of members was

32. Three million, towards the end of the 19th century, according to Thane (1981b:84).

33. In the context of the National Insurance Act, 1911 Fraser suggests that "Generally the friendly societies were sacrificed to the more powerful commercial interests ..." (1978:154). Under the terms of that Act, Friendly Societies became 'approved societies' and compulsory contributions were directed their way until their status changed again with the National Insurance and National Health Acts of 1946.

also putting a strain on the funds of Societies (Thane, 1981b:84).

Yeo has written that "... the creative, public, associational voluntary life of so many English working people during the second half of the nineteenth century - for example in Friendly Societies - has been subordinated, rendered less ambitious, or assimilated to rational capitalist or bureaucratic models during the twentieth century ..." (1979:69). Certainly the legal and economic conditions of existence of Friendly Societies (the wage form; the commodity form; the anarchic labour market etc.) made local, small scale and popular control difficult. Friendly Societies, in a sense, were by-passed rather than incorporated by capitalist relations of production. The provision of health care and a minimal income maintenance scheme, removed from the realm of the commodity form, has effectively supplanted the Friendly Society. The lesson to learn from the history of the Friendly Society is not that it was "assimilated to rational capitalist or bureaucratic models" but that it remained, and has continued to exist, outside the commodity form. (34) Friendly Society legislation, then, still provides an interesting area for socialist political involvement, especially when it is recognised that Building Societies fall within the purview of the Registrar of Friendly Societies who carries certain powers to control the transactions of registered organisations and to protect the rights of their members.

34. By the end of the century, most Societies had contracts with medical practitioners. Gosden writes: "The surgeon was conceived of as the servant and employee of the members of the society; the method of appointment - by all of the members gathered in their court or lodge - emphasised this. A medical officer who failed to give satisfaction would also fail to be re-elected" (1961:145-6).

Friendly Societies, so often discussed within the context of liberal histories of the development of welfare and social work in Britain and within the context of the hegemonisation of 'working class' organisation by the 'capitalist'-form ideology, can be seen to be much less easily dissolved into such lines of continuity than we are often led to believe. Foucault's concept of 'discipline' and the micro-physics of power have little heuristic value for an understanding of Friendly Societies. In addition, most Societies maintained a distance both from the patronising organisation of moral missionaries and aristocratic philanthropists and the legal and bureaucratic machinery of the state, making accusations of their 'incorporation' difficult to sustain.

(ii) The Case of Industrial Welfare

"... the rapid growth of commercial undertakings, and in particular of munition works, makes it difficult or impractical for the management to deal, unless by special arrangement, with the numerous problems of labour efficiency and the personal welfare of the employee. Yet, without some such special arrangement, there cannot fail to be diminished output, discontent, and unsmooth working. In matters of discipline, output, and long or exceptional exertion, the state of mind of those who are actually at work is all important" (Memorandum No.2 of Health of Munition Workers Committee, Ministry of Munitions, 1915:para 1(d)).

The work of F.W. Taylor represents, for Kinsey, the coincidence of organisation and control wherein "discipline, properly so called, obtains" (1979:60). Integral to this discipline of the workplace, notes Kinsey, is the modern contract of employment: together they form what Kinsey calls the "despotism of legality". Both Melossi and Lea, in the

same collection of papers as Kinsey's contribution, also make reference to Taylor, the 'father' of scientific management, but they emphasise that 'capitalist discipline' has moved beyond the workplace to cover "the whole of society" (Melossi, 1979:95). (35) If one wishes to look for empirical signs of a 'disciplinary' knowledge-power relation in the workplace, Taylorism would seem to be a somewhat flagrant and crude body of discourse to consider. Welfare discourse provides, ostensibly, a more appropriate frame of reference for a radical discussion of factory discipline. Whilst Taylor's mechanistic and behaviouristic approach sits well with Foucault's belief that the "body-machine complex" of the labour process reflects a disciplinary power which has "... the function not so much of deduction as of synthesis, not so much of exploitation of the product as of coercive link with the apparatus of production" (1977:153), it offends his view that discipline deals with "... a body of useful training and not of rational mechanics ..." and, "... by virtue of that very fact, a number of natural requirements and functional constraints ..." (ibid:155). If the science of welfare represents the utilization of the sciences of Man and Society and the techniques of the social enquiry in the policing of idleness, it would seem legitimate to seek for its telltale signs in the policing of labour and efficiency in the workplace.

35. For Melossi the Welfare State is an "administrative apparatus ... in which conquests of the working class are turned to the real advantage of capitalism" (1979:96). For Lea: "... the decline of the discipline of factory and market and their replacement by the inherently fragile structures of monetization" produces, as a "response", an expansion and sophistication of data gathering techniques "incorporating the welfare institutions" (1979:87).

For the beginning of just such an enquiry there are one or two obvious historical signposts. The early 19th century reveals the phenomenon of the enlightened and philanthropic industrialist, symbolised perhaps by Owen and the New Lanark mills. The early 20th century maintains the continuity of that line through Seebohm Rowntree and his poverty surveys. Marx, of course, provided another line of enquiry through his discussion of the Factories Acts. As Mishra discusses, Marx's analysis of factory legislation highlights the tension between his recognition of the effectivity of the agitation of the labour movement for improved conditions and the complexity of the social division of labour ⁽³⁶⁾ on the one hand, and the determination in the last instance by the economic on the other which effectively negated any gains made ⁽³⁷⁾ (Mishra, 1975).

The anarchic nature of production and commodity circulation under capitalist relations of production does, of course, make calculation by individual capitals of the benefits to be derived from welfare and safety measures a risky business. We have already touched on the anxiety expressed by philanthropic manufacturers that voluntary control over the working hours of children placed them, competitively, at a disadvantage. In examining the question of "employers' attitudes" to welfare issues,

36. Hay notes Marx's discussion of "the positive contributions of government inspectors, 'progressive employers' and the landed aristocracy" (1981:111-2).

37. A thesis given sophisticated treatment in Carson's studies of the 'conventionalisation' of the Factories Acts (1970; 1974). Stearns (1979) provides a similar treatment in a Swedish context. The non-enforcement of occupational safety laws, he suggests, "... is far more invidious than agency non-enforcement. It is rather a symptom of the stranglehold which the economic presuppositions of capitalism place upon a continued dynamic programme of industrial control" (1979:20).

Hay sees implications both for control and efficiency. He writes:

"... social control was only one motive for employer interest in welfare. Considerations of economic efficiency and cost ... were often much more important ..." (1981:110).

To these considerations might be added the simple point that enterprises have to make certain minimum efforts to attract and keep their required labour force. Increasing co-operation of labour through the trade union movement made wages and conditions a matter of genuine negotiation and struggle. Correspondingly, of course, we find organisations which purport to represent the interests of employers in specific industries or in the national economy as a whole.

This sub-section will be looking briefly at the concepts of industrial welfare and social work in an industrial setting. Despite the imperialist tendency of professional social work, (38) involvement in the private sector is notably absent in the professional social work journals, in training documents and even in histories of the profession. Neither Young and Ashton nor Woodroffe make any reference at all to the

38. The regular reader of Social Work Today, the journal of the British Association of Social Workers, and Community Care, a journal sent free "to professional social service staff", must be impressed by a social work discourse which attempts to embrace most practices in the name of method (art and music as therapy techniques, for example; as well as Zen Buddhism) and most areas of life in the name of genericism ("The impact of heart transplant surgery can be overwhelming for both patient and family. Mavis Shrimpton shows how social workers can help them cope". Social Work Today, Vol.13, No.25, 2 March 1982:12). Gilbert and Specht, describing a meeting in the USA at which social workers were discussing the content of a training course, write: "As the list of problems ... grew longer and wider in range, one professional who works with the state senate inquired, 'Is there any problem that you think you cannot deal with?' He then said he finds it difficult to convince the senate ... that social workers can do anything well" (1977:223).

industrial welfare worker in their respective histories of British (English) social work. Jeffreys (1965) notes that she included in her study "welfare officers employed in industry" but decided to exclude them from her Anatomy of Social Welfare Services. Whether this was because she felt they were merely 'vestigial organs' or, perhaps, 'foreign bodies', is not clear. Rodgers' and Dixon's pioneering Portrait of Social Work (1960) dedicates two or three pages to "Social Work in Industry" (ibid.:199-202) but the authors' primary focus was social work in statutory and voluntary organisations. Younghusband, in both of her Carnegie Trust reports on the employment and training of social workers (1947; 1951) provides some discussion of personnel management but, again, these references are brief and clearly peripheral.

It can, of course, simply be argued that social work in the work place is called personnel management. There can be no doubt, however, that we have here two quite distinct concepts and it is unlikely that the Institute of Personnel Management and the British Association of Social Workers would ever contemplate a merger. And yet the Institute of Personnel Management began its corporate life in 1913 as the Welfare Workers Association. (39)

39. Superficially, a case can be made for suggesting that contemporary personnel management and social work share some common ancestral features. In a gestural section on "Historical Development", Cuming writes in his The Theory and Practice of Personnel Management (1977): "The origins of personnel management can be found wherever enlightened employers have tried over the years to improve the lot of their workers. [...] Robert Owen ... incurred the wrath of his business partners by spending some of their profits on improving the working and living conditions of his labour force ..." (1977:4).

The 'origins' of social work training are located in the triumvirate of the Charity Organisation Society, Octavia Hill and the Settlement movement. In 1896, a Joint Lectures Committee was organised by the COS, with representatives from the Women's University Settlement in Southwark, the National Union of Women Workers and the COS. Octavia Hill's sister (Miranda) was an early lecturer (Smith, 1965:21; Woodroffe, 1974:53-4). In 1904, a School of Social Science was established at the University of Liverpool through the co-operative effort of the Settlement movement and the COS and, subsequently, universities in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester also established what Macadam calls "social training" (Macadam, 1945:23). The School of Sociology was established by the COS in London in 1903 and, in 1912, was incorporated into the London School of Economics and Political Science as the Social Science department. By the advent of the First World War, then, training for 'social' work and scientific welfare was closely linked with university teaching of the social sciences (Smith, 1965:48 et seq.; Macadam, 1945:23).

The agonising search for identity which is a particularly notable

feature within the contemporary social work profession (40) is not a new phenomenon. In a work published in 1925, Macadam was acknowledging "the vagueness which surrounds the expression 'social work'..." (1925:16) and was lamenting the lost opportunities for meeting the demands for "a new profession" with "definite equipment" which came from "New standards of public health, housing, conditions and security of employment, treatment of the criminal, moral and social hygiene ..." (ibid.:17). Macadam's 1925 book was entitled The Equipment of the Social Worker. By 1945 she was describing, in broadly similar terms, The Social Servant in the Making. Despite purporting to be A Review of the Provision of Training for the Social Services, Macadam's imperialistic designs for a university based programme "for the training of social workers" (1945:32) left few areas of public and private employment out of account. What Macadam reflects is the belief that wherever those in employment must, as an essential part of their task, deal with people (be they doctors or canteen assistants, Members of Parliament or nursery school teachers), social scientific knowledge

40. A recent Community Care editorial noted: "... there have been ten ... review groups since - but not including - Seebohm" and asks: "How many more working parties do we need before we satisfy ourselves about the nature of the role and tasks undertaken by social workers ...?" (February 25, 1982:1). Doubts and confusions over the identity of social work and how it ought to fulfil its tasks are regularly expressed in the social work journals quite apart from periodic moments of crisis, for example: on the creation of the British Union of Social Workers (Community Care and Social Work Today "Letters" page for July 26, 1979 and 7 and 14 August 1979 respectively); over the social work national strike of 1978/9; and the frontal attacks of June Lait and Colin Brewer (Brewer, "Are social workers really necessary?", Community Care, 30 March, 1977; Lait, "The unnecessary profession", Community Care, 5 April 1979; Brewer and Lait, Can Social Work Survive? Temple Smith, 1980). The issue of the nature of social work has again dominated social work journals during 1982 with the report of the Barclay Committee (NISW, 1981-2), (Social Work Today, 27 April 1982).

is of value. But if, at the beginning of the 20th century, there was some tendency to describe a broad range of tasks generically as 'social' work, discourse on the role of industrial welfare work was much less amorphous.

In September 1915, Lloyd George appointed the Health of Munition Workers Committee "To consider and advise on questions of industrial fatigue, hours of labour, and other matters affecting the personal health and physical efficiency of workers in munitions factories and workshops" (Ministry of Munitions, Final Report, 1918. Hereafter cited as "Munitions - Final Report, 1918"). Early in the Final Report (para.11) the Committee makes the point that, although the primary concern is munition workers, the Report "deals also with vital principles and practical methods affecting all forms of industry. Moreover the health of the industrial worker - man and woman - is but a part, essential, plastic, living, of the health of the people as a whole, which in its turn raises manifold problems of administration, economics, social relationships and even ethics ...". Fatigue and efficiency, then, are to be interpreted and given significance by reference to a wider system of considerations. That this was not mere rhetoric, the Committee set about establishing almost immediately. By December 1915, "Memorandum No.2" was issued by the Committee on the subject of Welfare Supervision (hereafter cited as "Welfare Supervision, 1915"). The Memorandum notes with some urgency that there are "conditions, outside the ordinary undertaking of factory management" which affect the efficiency of the workers: housing; transit; canteen provision; and the individual welfare of the employee (para.1). To tackle these problems, the

Committee recommended the establishment of officers with responsibility for welfare supervision.

Welfare work was not the 'brain child' of the Committee. In 1909 a conference on industrial welfare work was held in Birmingham to which seventeen firms sent representatives. A second conference, in York in 1913, attracted nearer thirty representatives (Cashmore, 1916:3; Munitions - Final Report, 1918:para.3). The Memorandum provided, within its meagre pages, liberal quotations from "large employers of labour" and "proprietors" in support of welfare work. One lamented that large establishments made it impossible for an employer or his directors "to be in personal touch" with employees. He continues:

"Those employers ... who recognise that their responsibility towards their employees involves duties beyond those realized through the medium of the wage office, have to seek to fulfil these obligations by other means" (Welfare Supervision, 1915:para.1(d)).

This has led, the employer notes, to the establishment in a number of factories "of an organized system of what is called social or welfare work, carried on by specially trained men and women" (ibid.).

From the varied quotations provided, the reader can build a picture of the employers' view of welfare work. The employer just quoted saw the "main duty" to be "to humanize industrial conditions of life and to foster and keep alive those right relationships which are the basis of a well-ordered and harmonious community". In the pursuit of these broad aims, the welfare worker must act as an intermediary: she is a go-between. Acting with "the confidence of the employees", being "always

in touch with them", the welfare worker can translate the "dissatisfactions and misunderstanding" which arise. The welfare worker is at once both guardian of business efficiency ("suggesting and advising upon improvements in conditions ... that may be helpful on the business side") and of the total welfare of the employees ("initiating and supervising ... clubs, societies and classes"; "visiting the sick"; giving "advice and assistance" on matters both 'personal' and 'private') (ibid.). Such endeavours, "another large employer" suggests, "... will show good results in the character and well-being of the workers". Welfare work, then, emphasises the Committee, is not something to be regarded as extraneous to the factory, it is "... a vital and integral part of the whole discipline and right organisation of the business". And, as the second employer is quoted as adding: "the economic results have justified the trouble and expense" (ibid.:para.1(d)). Ostensibly at least, Cashmore, a contemporary observer, would seem to make a valid point in her suggestion that, unlike the "scientific management" approach of welfare workers in the USA, British welfare work was "philanthropic", "indefinite" and "sporadic" (1916:4). (41)

It might be said that amongst the conditions of existence of the concept of welfare work are economic considerations which require calculation of the relationship between production and the physical and

41. "But there have been", Cashmore continues, "from the start, the two elements that good morale, good conditions, good health, form an economic asset ... and secondly, that it is a part of our duty to our neighbour, a recognition that master and man are of the same flesh and blood ..." (1916:4).

mental state of the available labour force. Part of this calculation, for some employers, was a philanthropic concern for the lives of those they employed. However, other specific conditions were dictated by the political and legal environment and by the consequent nature of the available national labour supply. The First World War demanded a large armed force supported by the industrial production of weaponry. Paradoxically, then, those skilled, socialised and strengthened for heavy industry were required on the battlefield and the munitions industry had to turn to young men, too young to enter the forces, and to female labour. Discourse on welfare work is discourse about the policing of an unsuitable labour force. (42) Apart from a whole series of disparate and often mundane duties performed by existing welfare workers, we find unequivocal involvement in the policing of behaviour and morality both in and outside the factory. One proprietor of "one of the largest" munition factories is quoted: "... we feel it highly desirable that the workpeople should keep their minds occupied with healthy recreation whilst they are away from the Works, which reflects directly upon their efficiency ..." (Welfare Supervision, 1915:para.4). This particular

42. The Memorandum of 1915 noted as a matter of urgency that a system of Welfare Supervision was essential "where women or girls are employed" (Welfare Supervision, 1915:para.7). The Memorandum moved on to record matters - "particularly of discipline and conduct - in which helpful oversight is specially needed in the case of women and girls". Specific examples given were: "the conduct of foremen towards women workers; ... the character and behaviour of fellow women workers; ... the maintenance of suitable and sufficient sanitary accommodation; ... the worker's own state of health; ... her capacity to withstand ... physical strain ... long hours, overtime, or night work" (ibid.:para.8). Welfare Supervision for male workers is mentioned in the two final paragraphs but it is said to be "of particular importance in the case of boys" (ibid.:para.12).

firm had employed a Chaplain, who had "knowledge of workpeople", to settle disputes amongst families living in hostels and "to generally look after the children".

The well-being of employees is, without doubt, in the minds of those who spoke for their firms (cinemas and concert halls were built; doctors and operating theatres provided), but so also is the moral standing of those in their charge ("A good Lady Superintendent ... is, we consider, advantageous to secure good order and protect the moral welfare of the girls ..."). The range of duties envisaged for the welfare worker is more specifically outlined in the Final Report of 1918 and there are broad parallels with contemporary discussions about the social work 'task'. First there are the mundane, practical duties. For the present day social worker, a contentious issue is involvement in the "... provision of bath aids for the handicapped, bus passes for the elderly ..." and so on, which trained social workers see as not part of their duties (BASW, 1977:para.3.5). For the welfare worker, duties could include making recommendations for the provision of seats for the workers and the provision of overalls (Munitions - Final Report, 1918: Appendix J). Secondly, however, there is a mixture of duties which highlight what the BASW Report calls the "dual dimension of care and

control" (BASW, 1977:para.2.5). (43) The welfare supervisor, then, should have responsibility for arranging the transfer of a worker whose health was being affected by her present work; she should ensure that clean and healthy conditions were maintained and keep in contact with all cases of serious accident or illness. She should also, however: "be responsible for all questions of general behaviour"; supervise cloakrooms and sanitary conveniences to ensure general cleanliness, but also to prevent "loitering" and "pilfering" (Munitions - Final Report, 1918:Appendix J).

"The first of the great operations of discipline is", writes Foucault, "... the constitution of 'tableaux vivants', which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities" (1977:1148). A major facet of the work of welfare workers during both the First and Second World Wars was the co-ordination of the transfer of workers to munition towns, finding them accommodation, and arranging transport to the factory (Welfare Supervision, 1915:para.1(a) - (c); Final Report, 1918:para.457, Appendix J; Ministry of Labour and National Service, 1941:para.4). Discipline also controls activity: it constitutes "a totally useful

43. Social workers struggle to 'resolve' what they see at worst as a conflict and at least as a strain between their role as "an enabling profession" and the authority they carry (statutory authority but also professional authority) and the control it often requires them to exercise. "Authority seems to be one of the most difficult concepts for those of us in social work to assimilate", writes one contributor to a BASW conference - "Social work - an enabling profession" (Social Work Today, Vol.11, No.6, October 9th 1979:14). The tension is also apparent in the perennial question examined in social work journals - 'is residential care part of social work' and in the ambiguity experienced by many Scottish social workers who, after 1971, found themselves operating as probation officers and, subsequently, staffing prison social work units.

time" (Foucault, 1977:150). "The Welfare Supervisor should have some way of observing the health in relation to the efficiency of the workers ..." (Munitions - Final Report, 1918:Appendix J.III(b)). This might be done, the Report suggests, by watching wages earned: falling wages being a presage of failing health. Or the welfare worker could study time sheets and sickness records. In terms of what Foucault calls the "body-object articulation" (ibid.:152), the welfare supervisor must concern herself with the "geneses of individuals". "Regard must be had to the individuality of the workers and to the wide variations that exist in their physical and mental capacity, and in their social circumstances and habits" (Final Report, 1918:para.436(d)). The process, then, is one in which the welfare worker individualises but for the purpose of normalisation and homogenisation (Foucault, 1977:184). It is a process which demands social enquiry: 'files' are constituted, 'cases' constructed. "A record should be opened for each new worker containing information as to age, physical condition, home circumstances etc. To this record should be added from time to time details of progress, ill-health, broken time, and other matters likely to prove of value" (Final Report, 1918:para.446(b)). In the maintenance of files, welfare workers are advised to do home visits. This is seen as an extension of care: "Workers who are ill may be visited in order to ascertain that they are properly cared for ..." But it is also an extension of control: "... visits may usefully be paid to the parents of the younger girls ... to discuss ... the merits and progress as well as the demerits of their children [...]. Minor offences by girls can sometimes be better dealt

with by the parents ..." (Final Report, 1918:para.453(i)).

Similarly, in considering welfare supervision for boys and men, the Report discusses the role of Boy Visitors whose task it is "to get at the root" of problems such as "thriftlessness, ill-discipline and other evils". Through "investigations of the boys' circumstances, home life etc.", the Boy Visitor can "work towards getting contented, well-disciplined boy workers, and the information he gathers will always be available to assist the staff in the smooth working of the factory" (ibid.:para.483). (44)

Welfare Supervisors, then, assisted in creating an ordered work force. They participated in selection interviews which acted as normalising and sifting procedures. As one Supervisor is quoted: "One rejects the old, the infirm, the undersized, the short sighted, the dirty, the flashy, the anaemic and the corpulent ..." (Final Report, 1918:para.464). Once selected, labour is then categorised according to the dictates of the "body-machine complex". One must prevent, for example, "... a dull boy from being set to work which requires thought, or a bright intelligent boy from being allocated to a task which could well be performed by one who is mentally dull" (ibid.:

44. Foucault talks of the 'de-institutionalization' of disciplinary mechanisms (1977:211). It is not, however, being argued, as Foucault does, that 'discipline' begins to "circulate in a 'free' state; ... broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted" (ibid.). Welfare discipline must be studied within its specific conditions of existence and in terms of its own effectivity. Welfare discipline as industrial welfare may become deinstitutionalised to the degree that the conditions of existence allow practice outside the factory in the same way that a prisoner on parole from prison remains subject to the discipline of the prison extended into the community (Fine, 1980:24).

para.488). Welfare Supervision controls activity within the factory in the policing of a totally useful time. And it may also provide knowledge about the phenomenon of 'lost workers' through "Intelligent and sympathetic follow-up of absentees ..." (ibid.:Appendix D).

Chris Jones has argued that there are certain heuristic advantages to be gained by studying social work through an analysis of social work training (1978:v-vi; 1979:72). Training is, he argues, a major means of socialisation into the profession. There can be no doubt that as more and more employers of social workers demand specific professional qualifications (e.g. CQSW), formal training will occupy an increasingly important place in the recognition of agents as social workers. The important point is, however, recognition. To be a specific agent of decision and calculation requires recognition of that status by other agents in a social relationship. For many social workers, that recognition resides initially in the fact of being employed by, for example, a social work agency identified as such by statute. Continued recognition may depend upon acceptance by others (employer; colleagues; clients) as a competent practitioner. This, in its turn may depend on the acquisition of certain skills and knowledge on which decisions can be based. For many agents, recognised as social workers, the means of reaching decisions were acquired through experience and 'desk training'. Formal training, then, is merely one form in which one of the conditions of existence of social work is manifested.

Writers such as Macadam, writing in the first quarter of the 20th century, were certain that they could identify a core of practices as 'social work'. Those practising social work might work in a "great

diversity of occupations" and some may practise in a "highly specialised" manner but they could be distinguished from professions "for which social training is highly desirable" but which could not "be said to fall within the category of social work" (1925:112).

For Macadam, welfare work in factories, was unequivocally a specialised branch of social work which was "rapidly becoming an independent profession" (1925:113). (45) The Health of Munition Workers Committee was also, in 1915, prepared to acknowledge the relationship between welfare work and social work more generally by recommending the Social Study courses already in existence "for students preparing themselves as members of various Local Government bodies, as Welfare Workers in factories, and for others engaged in social administration ..." (1915: footnote to para.9). In its later Report, the Committee went further: "Though there will be exceptions it will generally be desirable that candidates should undergo a special period of training" (Final Report, 1918:para.466). The Committee, in fact, endorsed the recommendations of a Committee of University representatives (The Selection and Training of Welfare Supervisors in Factories and Workshops, 1917). On the basis of the latter Report, the Joint University Council for Social Studies (JUC) set up another Committee to look more fully at the training of welfare workers (Macadam, 1925:113-4). Among those on that Committee one might note: Hilda Cashmore, warden of Bristol University Settlement; J.J. Mallon, warden of Toynbee Hall; Professor

45. In 1920, the Welfare Workers' Institute required the possession of a diploma or certificate from an approved training course as a condition of membership.

Urwick; and representatives of trade unions, employers' organisations, welfare workers and the Factory Inspectorate. Elizabeth Macadam was honorary secretary. The JUC report - University Training for Welfare Work in Industry and Commerce (1921) - expressed the view that "students should qualify for social work generally before specialising in welfare work" (ibid.:9). (46) It is clear that the Committee felt that welfare work should not be tackled by those without a Social Studies diploma (ibid.:12).

Among those agencies in a position to influence the process of recognition of welfare work (the state: the Ministry of Munitions made the appointment of welfare supervisors obligatory in all national factories and the Police, Factories etc (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1916 required supervision of women on night shifts; the employers; the welfare workers' associations; and the training establishments) there was a marked acceptance that it was a branch of a wider practice, known as social work. According to the Final Report of the Health of Munition Workers Committee, the Central Association of Welfare Supervisors had around 600 members (1918:para.475, footnote) and up to 150 Welfare Supervisors for boys had been appointed by April 1918, with a

46. "The practical side of the curriculum must necessarily include training in administration under skilled guidance in connection with Health, Housing, Employment and Unemployment, Education ..., Administration of Justice, Juvenile Organisations ..., After Care etc. In this way, students gain first-hand knowledge of social problems and their proposed solution ..." (JUC, 1921:11). The Committee went on to recommend against a special diploma or certificate for welfare workers; "the usual Social Study certificate or diploma, which should bear a special endorsement to the effect that the candidate has satisfied the examiners in that part of the training which deals more specifically with welfare work" being seen as sufficient (ibid.:12).

separate association of Boy Welfare Supervisors being planned (1918: para.490, footnote). The rough figure of approximately 800 Supervisors, in munition factories alone, is confirmed by a footnote to paragraph 9(b) of the same Report. As a branch of social work in the first two decades of the 20th century, the relative size of welfare work can be gauged by comparison with other acknowledged branches. The first hospital almoner, so the historians of social work tell us, was appointed in 1895 (Fido, 1977:228; Woodroffe, 1974:61; Chambers, 1959:367) and formal training began in 1905 (Younghusband, 1959:para. 207). According to Macadam there were 74 almoners in 1925 (1925:122) but by 1947 the Institute of Almoners had 700 members (Younghusband, 1947: para.15). Psychiatric social work, which "made its début in 1927 in this country" (Chambers, 1959:372) could boast a total of only 523 persons who, by 1951, had qualified as psychiatric social workers since formal training began in 1929. Of these, 331 were said to be employed in the UK (Ministry of Health, Mackintosh Report, 1951:para.36). (47) In 1900 there was said to be 100 police court missionaries (Young and Ashton, 1956: 174). By 1947 there were 750 probation officers and by 1950, 1026 (Younghusband, 1951:para.40).

Despite the numerical dominance of industrial welfare work over the other branches of social work, it occupies a noticeably peripheral relevance within welfare discourse and, in the present situation, it is unlikely to feature at all in general social work texts or in generic

47. By 1956/7, this figure had risen to 505 psychiatric social workers in employment (Younghusband, 1959:para.804).

social work training courses. The British Federation of Social Workers (BFSW) was formed in 1935 (Macadam, 1945:27) but in 1947, when Professor Simey chaired a Committee on Salaries and Conditions of Work of Social Workers, the Institute of Personnel Management (48) was not affiliated to the BFSW. (49) The Institute was, however, one among several organisations which provided evidence (Simey, 1947:16-7) and was used, in a sense, as a pay analogue. Younghusband referred to personnel management in both of her enquiries into the employment and training of social workers in Britain (1947; 1951) but felt obliged to record:

"The Personnel Manager may often engage in case work of an intricate nature ... but his or her main concern is with the worker's appropriate contribution to an industrial undertaking rather than with the worker as an end in himself, and it would be difficult to argue that the Personnel Manager is primarily a social worker ..." (1947:para.374).

It should, therefore, come as less of a surprise to note that in presenting a "Brief chronology of social work education and training in the United Kingdom", CCETSW was able to list as important milestones: the 1834 Poor Law Act; the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913; and the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in Northern Ireland in 1948; but make no reference

48. The Institute was incorporated in 1946 and had, formerly, been the Institute of Industrial Welfare Workers (1924); the Central Association of Welfare Workers (1916); and the Welfare Workers Association (1913) (Cuming, 1977:5).

49. Notable 'professional' associations which were affiliated were: Association of Family Caseworkers; Association of Mental Health Workers; Association of Psychiatric Social Workers; Institute of Almoners; National Association of Probation Officers.

to industrial welfare work (CCETSW, 1975:Appendix A).

From the earliest days of its discussion, welfare work was set apart from other social work. In an article in The Englishwoman, in 1916, Macadam outlined what she saw as the "very definite attraction" of welfare work: "This lies in the fact that appointments are made, or ought to be made, on a definitely business footing, on the grounds that the increased comfort and consequent efficiency of the women workers justifies the expenditure" (1916:240). For Macadam, the welfare worker was to fill the role of go-between by winning the confidence of both employer and employee but, in the final analysis, "She is engaged in a business relation and represents the employer in matters relating to the general welfare of the ... employees" (ibid.: 248). In addition, whilst the welfare worker should concern herself with "technical matters and ... the business" generally, "above all, a critical attitude must be avoided" (ibid.:249). It is understandable, then, that at a time of increasing union strength and activity (50) there should be suspicion from unions about welfare work. As the Health of Munition Workers Committee observed: "The old antagonism of 'capital' and 'labour' makes the motive of the employer in appointing a welfare supervisor subject to suspicion that he is seeking profit at the expense of his workers" (Final Report, 1918:para.472). Both the Ministry of Munitions Report (1918:para.475) and the JUC Report (1921:7) use the word 'misunderstanding' to describe the friction that can occur

50. It was out of concern about industrial unrest that the government set up a Committee of enquiry in 1916 under the Ministry of Reconstruction and, in 1917, the Whitley Report recommended the creation of Industrial Councils through which employers and employees could work together.

between employer and employee and both refer to a memorandum prepared by a Joint Committee of the Woolwich Trades and Labour Council and the Woolwich Labour Party (51) as containing "constructive proposals" (Munitions) and as anticipating the "probable direction in which welfare work is likely to turn in the future" (JUC). The proposals do, in fact, lay down a serious challenge to both state and capital to ensure that welfare work comes under the democratic control of the labour movement. The proposals suggest, inter alia: welfare supervision should be aimed at promoting the workers' welfare rather than increasing output; welfare work should be under the democratic control of workers and employers; welfare supervisors should be drawn as far as possible from among the workers; conferences should be convened by the Trades Council and Local Labour Party to consider the aims, scope and methods of welfare work. The "constructive proposals" have to be viewed in the context of a discourse of the industrial enterprise legitimated by conceptions of scientific management and efficient production, rather

51. Reprinted in the Woolwich Pioneer for February 22nd 1918 and see Munitions - Final Report, 1918:para.474 and Joint University Council, 1921:Appendix which both quote in full the eleven-point conditions suggested by the Joint Committee as being essential to any scheme of welfare supervision.

than socialisation of the production process. (52) They also have to be seen in the light of the knowledge that welfare workers policed factories, rooting out the idle and the inefficient and, on occasion, discouraging union membership (Niven, 1967:42), and were often brought in from other occupations (clergymen; teachers; organists; doctors; gymnasts; cooks; ex-policemen; according to Cashmore, 1916:5) rather than from amongst the workforce.

The scheme suggested by the Woolwich labour movement was far from prophetic. Discourse on industrial welfare sits very well with the discourse of the 'disciplines' described by Foucault but, if welfare work is a 'discipline' in that sense, it did not follow the trajectory of social work discourse. Given common epistemological conditions of existence which provided the matrix of social sciences for both welfare work and social work, the forms taken must be considered in their individual specificity and according to quite separate calculations of their effectivity. The history of personnel management, viewed through

52. In reviewing the historical development of industrial welfare, the Munitions - Final Report makes reference to the work of Sir William Mather who attempted "One of the first control experiments" in his engineering works in 1893/4. Mather's study, the Report maintains, "demonstrates the value to the workman, the employer and the community as a whole, of applying to industry the scientific method and the scientific spirit" (1918:para.14). The scientific method produced: an increase of 0.4% in the ratio of wage costs to turnover; a power (gas, electricity etc.) saving of 0.4%; a fall in the amount of time lost, from 2.46% to 0.46%; a fall in piece workers' wages of 0.78%; an "increased cheerfulness and brightness" amongst the workforce (ibid.). The scientific spirit produced the following statement from Mather: "We seem to have been working in harmony with a natural law ... Of this I am assured, that the most economical production is obtained by employing men only so long as they are at their best - when this stage is passed there is no true economy in their continued work" (ibid.:emphasis in original). The Committee describe Mather's work as an "admirable experiment".

the history of its professional associations, is one of gradual consolidation within the enterprise through a process of re-definition away from issues of individual welfare and towards labour management. Niven's historical survey shows that from the early 1920s doubts were being expressed about the retention of "welfare" in the nomenclature and that "labour management" and "personnel management" were consistently being suggested as more suitable alternatives (Niven, 1967:68,83,90). Although as late as the end of the Second World War a social science based education was accepted as the most satisfactory basis on which to build a career in personnel management (Niven, 1967:109), the Institute of Personnel Management began to take an increasing role in training. Fulfilling the role of go-between, the personnel worker could not simplistically be described as working with the management 'against' the workers. A quite separate organisation of employers, interested in industrial welfare, was started in 1919 - the Industrial Welfare Society (Cuming, 1977:5) - and was most vociferous in its objections to the Institute's plans for incorporation in 1922. (53) In 1957, the Institute convened a study group to examine personnel management. A vital question to be resolved emerged: "Is the personnel officer a reformer, a missionary in industry carrying better ideals of human cooperation ...? Is he a manager like any other ... carrying neither more nor less of such moral and social responsibility as all managers ...? Can he be both?" (Niven, 1967:139). In the event,

53. As the Society recognised, incorporation would identify the Institute as the representative body on all matters of industrial welfare and would give it a formal recognition and increased influence (Niven, 1967:68-70).

Niven records, emphasis was given "towards incorporating the personnel officer firmly in the management team" (ibid.:140).

4. Realignment

At the beginning of the 19th century, certain of the conditions of existence of industrial welfare located it broadly within the realm of welfare discourse as an aspect of social work. Conditions of existence cannot be considered as immutable, however. At some point the balance of conditions altered to the degree that 'industrial welfare' became 'personnel management'. Unlike other social work clients, for example, many of those in employment were able to influence the conditions of existence of industrial welfare by refusing to co-operate in company 'thrift' schemes or to recognise the status of the welfare worker. (54) Stronger pressure could also be exerted by trade unions. State involvement in influencing the conditions of existence of industrial welfare appears to have been confined mainly to moments of greatest crisis, during the two wars. The political conditions of existence, then, were formed by the struggle between employers, unions and the professional associations of welfare workers. Basically, then, the major arena of struggle would have occurred in the private sector between capital and employers' organisations, and labour and unions and professional organisations seeking to represent labour. It could be

54. Many social work clients are referred to the social work agency by other agents. This may mean they have little or no choice in the decision about becoming a 'client', either because they are children (taken into care) or because they have lost the right to decide (offenders made the wards of a social work agency by a court or for after-care following discharge from a prison or other compulsory confinement).

argued that this arena differed significantly from that in which the political conditions of existence of other branches of social work were played out. At the very hub of capitalist relations, then, the welfare form of discipline is displaced by another which seeks not to police idleness but to regulate labour. The personnel manager is a technical specialist exercising a necessary operation of capital: "monitoring the performance of personnel" (Cutler et al., 1977:309). It is of value to record, then, that welfare discourse is not omnipresent and must be considered in its specificity. Welfare discourse as 'discipline' is not merely one manifestation of an all pervading micro-physics of power.

(i) Social Work : the Practice of Scientific Welfare. For those early-century pedagogues of social work such as Macadam, industrial welfare was merely one among many occupations which shared the common aspect of having "intimate dealings ... with working class people" (1925:20). In a paper subtitled by Stedman Jones "Notes on the remaking of a working class", he suggests that activities such as were briefly outlined in Section 2 above (Charity Organization Society; settlement movement; etc.) were designed to 'civilize' the 'working class'. He further suggests that, effectively, these strategies failed, that the 'working class' maintained a distinctive culture but that it had become conservative and defensive (1973/4:passim). Whilst in no way endorsing this amorphous conception of 'the working class', the fact cannot be ignored that classes are often identified as 'sub-cultures'. Certainly, those who participated in the production of welfare discourse at the beginning of the century were often

unequivocal about the target population for social work activity - 'the working class'. (55) Integral to the training of a social worker, then, was an 'ethnographic' knowledge of 'working class' life. Under the heading - "Access to Normal Working-class Life", Macadam discusses the desirability and problems of gaining a "sympathetic knowledge of working-class conditions". Whilst acknowledging the precedents for actually living amongst the working class for a while, Macadam cautions that "... it is open to question whether it would be desirable to plunge young men and women ... into a mode of life to which they were entirely unaccustomed" (1925:91-3). (56) Earlier, in 1916, Macadam had already noted as "the first practical essential" in the training of industrial welfare workers the requirement to obtain "Knowledge of working women and girls" (1916:244). (57) The Joint University Council's Report on such training endorsed this notion, recommending "residence in a settlement in a working-class

55. That social work is work with the poor, the deprived, the residuum or 'the working class' more broadly is a familiar theme in social work discourse. "It is estimated that poverty and bad housing cause around 60% of the work undertaken by social workers" (CCETSW, 1976:43). "... social work is predominantly dealing with the more vulnerable members of society, (those who by and large are not the prime beneficiaries of economic and technological changes) ..." (BASW, 1979:2). "Social welfare clients were disproportionately drawn from those living in poorer conditions and from less well-to-do sections of the community" (Jeffreys, 1965:43). Those working from a more radical orientation do, of course, gain political mileage from this association; see, for example, Handler (1973:1); Chris Jones (1979:81).

56. As a suitable substitute, Macadam recommended Friendly Societies; Church and Chapel Societies; Housing Councils; Flower Shows; and Temperance Societies; amongst others (1925:93).

57. To be gained, in this instance, from elementary school teaching; district nursing; the Workers' Educational Association etc.

neighbourhood" (1921:11). (58) But it is important to note that it is not simply life amongst society's detritus which is being recommended but also "some form of experience of the best type of working women ..." (Macadam, 1916:244) and "the normal conditions of working-class life" (JUC, 1921:11). Cultural standards are relative: the aim is not to raise the horizons of the 'normal working-class' but to raise up the detritus to become self-respecting 'working-class' people.

Condemned as ineffective by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834, social enquiry became, during the 19th century, a necessary practice in the policing of idleness. Given that social workers were rarely from a 'working class' background, it was necessary to educate them into 'working class' ways of life. Jeffreys, in 1965, showed that this requirement had not lost its purpose. "Ideally", she felt, "theoretical knowledge ... should have been reinforced by personal experience of work in a manual occupation and residence in a working class area particularly if the trainee comes from a middle class background" (1965:306). The Seeborn Committee, in its Report in 1968, provided official endorsement of the view that the settlement principle was the ideal form through which to provide social services. Talking of the concept of the area team, the Report concludes: "The ideal would be a purpose-built building, which would serve as a focal point

58. One member of the committee, Mrs Calthrop - representing the women's section of the National Union of General Workers, objected to this recommendation, and suggested "practical experience in a factory for at least six months to a year. This should entail residence in a working-class family, and the student should, if possible, live on the wages that she earns as a working woman" (1921:14). See also Cashmore's very similar suggestions (1916:15).

for the local community (para.588). (59) Territorial coverage, often with individual social workers allocated to a particular 'patch', much like a police constable's 'beat', is a familiar arrangement in social service and social work departments. (60)

From its earliest moments discussion of social work training has placed great emphasis on becoming practically involved in the 'doing' of social work (the 'placement'). Writing in 1925, Macadam felt that the relatively recent "shifting of the centre of training from practical organizations to the university" had resulted in an over-emphasis upon the academic aspect of training (1925:79). Expressing an apparently timeless concern in social work to achieve the 'right' balance between theory and practice, Macadam felt that: "A well-trained man or woman learns the facts on which his or her future work must be built not only from books, but from real life. He sees things as they are, not as they are supposed to be" (ibid.:80). Traditionally

59. In the Scottish context, see Social Work and the Community (Scottish Education Department/Scottish Home and Health Department, 1966:para.50).

60. An article on the use of the so-called "unitary approach" in the practical placement aspect of social work training spells out the requirement for the social worker to know his area. "The age distribution, housing situation, employment opportunities, shopping and transport facilities, access to schools, health centres, community centres, provision of ... residential establishments, day care facilities, play groups and social groups, all these and more highlight social problems and social needs. This knowledge enables individual referrals to social services departments to be placed in context" (Webber, 1977:460).

this balance has been achieved by dividing the available training time neatly down the middle. (61) The emphasis on empiricism, highlighted by Macadam's equation of "real life" and "things as they are", tends to dominate social work discourse. 'Theory' becomes interpreted as a 'tool' and a 'skill' to be utilized eclectically by the practising social worker in the real world. Social work students, interviewed for the journal Social Work Today, spoke of having "placements to keep us in touch with reality" and of having joined the training course "to gain more tools" for dealing with this reality. Trained social workers appeared to one student to know "everything": joining a course allowed one to "make mistakes" along with other novices. (62)

The art of social enquiry is the art of objectification of the individual. "The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement" (Foucault, 1977:184). Empirical observation of the individual in terms of theories about the "geneses of individuals" and the "progress of societies" are interpreted and given form through an eclecticism which is variously described as 'treating the whole man'; the unitary approach;

61. "We consider ... as a rule, from one-third to a half of the time should be given to practice" (JUC, 1921:10; describing two year training for industrial welfare work; and see Munitions - Final Report, 1918: para.467). "We ... think that supervised practice in the field should occupy about one-half of the total time" (Younghusband Report, 1959: para.897). "... students should spend around 50% of the course in the practice setting" (BASW, 1979:para.6.36 (2)). "It is ... recommended that approximately half their time should be spent in residential placements ..." (Williams Committee Report - Caring for People, 1967: para.28).

62. "Students talking ..."; Educational Special - Social Work Today, Vol.11, No.8, 23 October 1979:9-10).

genericism; and systems theory. This is an approach for which the smallest of detail, viewed holistically, may have the greatest of relevance.

"Every scrap of knowledge of any kind is grist to the mill of the social worker, and there is something to be said for a wide and comprehensive basis of education" (Macadam, 1925:62).

The utilization of theory becomes, then, in social work discourse, a pragmatic exercise. 'Theories' become tools, keys with which to open doors and solve particular problems. At the moment, social work journals and training courses are giving a great deal of attention to a systems theory approach to social work which, Webber suggests, is one way of dealing "with the dilemma in the interpretation of 'generic' necessitated by the development of multi-service agencies" (1977:455). Primary exponents of such a 'theory', Pincus and Minahan, suggest: "Any theory cannot be expected to be adequate for all situations" (quoted by Specht and Vickery, 1977:32). Theories are, in fact, selected from a social work tool box and tried against the problem until the correct 'fit' is found (Specht, 1977:31-2). (63) No single theory will supply all the answers to a problem, (64) consequently as many as

63. In the same collection of papers McCaughan, writing about 'group work', notes: "The model that a worker selects for practice should be relevant to the purpose of the group with which he works" (1977:159).

64. "In any instance, a single perspective will neither fully explain the cause of juvenile delinquency nor provide the basis for designing interventions that will fully eliminate it" (Specht, 1977:31). The operative phrases are "cause" and "eliminate" and they reveal a profound empiricism which seems to have remained impervious to the otherwise saturating influence of labelling theory and the sociology of deviance in general. !

possible should be collected. (65) Pincus and Minahan, in their contribution to Specht's and Vickery's Integrating Social Work Methods (1977:103), endorse this view but, lest the reader should imagine that "... the theoretical orientation appears to dictate the purpose of the social worker's practice", they emphasise that there is a "social work frame of reference, derived from a clear notion of the function and purpose of the profession" and this serves as the "primary guide in analysing and dealing with social situations".

In its self-conscious desire to become an acceptable profession, social work discourse often rehearses what it is that is essential to its theory and practice, hence the near obsession with finding common principles. (66) That this central core is never delineated, least of all to the satisfaction of social work practitioners and theorists, remains a constant burden to social work. In some respects, control

65. "... different theories illuminate different aspects of a phenomenon and, therefore, the wider, more flexible and more varied our theoretical base is, the more possibilities we will have for different types of social work intervention" (Specht, 1977:31).

66. In a course outline, one university social work department has noted as an objective of the course: "To concentrate on the common principles which underlie all forms of social work practice, and on the transfer of concepts from one field of practice to another. The main emphasis is on 'differential diagnosis', or differential assessment of a situation, and the choice of social work method best suited to that situation" (Reproduced in Michael, 1976:Appendix F:664-5). The attempt to shed the last residues of terminology borrowed from other discourses is often, however, a less than satisfying task. In the same course outline we find: "There were ... three years in which examinations involved three papers, at first named Social Administration, Human Growth and Behaviour, and Social Work Method, but latterly named Social Work 1, 2 and 3, since there was always some confusion about whether a paper was aimed at knowledge content or at practice content". And, a little later, registering concern at "the medical sound of the phrase" - "differential diagnosis and treatment", the document suggests "psychosocial diagnosis and choice of treatment method instead" (1976:667,668).

over the definition of an occupation is a matter of relative control and power. The medical profession has effectively hegemonised discourse on pathology to the general exclusion of folk medicines, faith healing and so on. Social work has also been successful in hegemonising vast areas of practice but lives under a constant threat of condemnation for poaching from the functions of other occupations (the clergy; psychiatry) and other social institutions (the family; the community). At a more fundamental level, the social work dilemma over reconciling theory and practice is a reflection of its empiricism. "It is a mark of British administration", suggests Heywood, "that it is empirical, that it works on a preference for observed facts rather than theory, and that changes come by the testing of facts against accumulated personal experience" (Heywood, 1964:11). The recent profusion of theoretical texts in social work reflects a concerted effort to rid the profession of this empiricist legacy. Like the social sciences generally, the argument has been that social work is a relatively immature enterprise, yet to come of age. (67) However, like the social sciences generally, social work arose from a matrix of discourses about Man and Society at the beginning of the 19th century.

67. Writing in Specht and Vickery (1977), Younghusband lamented that "... training would be more effective if we had fairly precise 'hard' knowledge about the application of theory to practice which we could help students to learn to apply. But we haven't reached that point yet" (1977:111).

Social work cannot, therefore, simply renounce its medical homologue, (68) for example. The epistemological conditions of existence are those of the human sciences in general. Speaking of the formation of the human sciences, Foucault rehearses what has been said above about social work:

"The controversies to which a search for a specific positivity in the field of the human sciences has given rise are only too well known: Genetic or structural analysis? Explanation or comprehension? Recourse to what is 'underneath' or decipherment kept strictly to the level of reading? In fact, all these theoretical discussions did not arise ... because ... [the human sciences] ... had to deal, in man, with an object so complex that it was not yet possible to find a unique mode of access towards it, or because it was necessary to use several in turn. These discussions were able to exist only in so far as the positivity of the human sciences rests simultaneously upon the transference of three distinct models. This transference is not a marginal phenomenon for the human sciences (... a detour to include some exterior intelligibility, a confirmation derived from sciences already constituted); nor is it a limited episode in their history (a crisis of formation, at a time when they were still so young that they could not fix their concepts and their laws themselves). On the contrary, it is a matter of an ineffaceable fact, which is bound up, forever, with their particular arrangement in the epistemological space" (1970:356).

The "constituent models" of the human sciences, borrowed from biology, economics and the study of language, have been discussed throughout this thesis. Most social work theorists would cite "the biological,

68. In its Eleventh Annual Report (1880), the Charity Organisation Society emphasised that: "Charity organisation is not mere investigation and detection; it is a diagnosis and the art of healing" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:136, footnote). Eighty years later, the Younghusband Report recorded that: "The processes used by doctors and social workers are to some extent comparable - relevant history taking and assessment of the problem, medical or social diagnosis, treatment and follow up" (1959:para.976).

psychological and sociological aspects of man" (Leonard, 1966:1) as forming the framework of social work theory and practice. The fundamental paradox about this is that, in categorising that through which social work can be represented to itself, theorists "find themselves treating as their object what is in fact [a]... condition of possibility" (Foucault, 1970:364) of social work discourse.

What we have here, then, is the source of that constant tension which characterises social work discourse. The attempt to reconcile theory and practice is the attempt to treat Man as an object of scientific enquiry. The epistemological conditions of existence of the social sciences necessitate that they analyse Man not merely as a biological organism, not merely as homo economicus, but also in terms of the ways in which he represents life, desire, conflict and death to himself. In seeking to describe the way in which Man represents himself to himself, the social sciences of necessity must encounter that "element of darkness", the "unthought", the Other (Foucault, 1970: 326). What we find in the development of the social sciences and therefore in social work discourse, is the increasingly sophisticated attempt to reveal this Other side to Man: the natural being behind the alienated form; the reality repressed within the unconscious mind. The projection of Man as "a strange empirico-transcendental doublet" has led to the attempt "to make the empirical, in man, stand for the transcendental" (ibid.:321). Social work anguish over reconciliation of theory and practice is a reflection of that wider chimera - the reconciliation of the empirical and the transcendental through the sciences of Man. Radical and liberal attempts to solve this riddle

reveal the conditions of existence which they both share and which makes the one the mere mirror image of the other: "... a discourse attempting to be both empirical and critical cannot but be both positivist and eschatological ..." (Foucault, 1970:320). In fact, both radical and liberal approaches must work within the "constituent models" available to the human sciences, each one of which can be used to interpret and criticise the others. Thus, if we take as examples the 'models of social work practice' outlined by Butrym (1976:16-39), the following comments can be made. 'The Problem-Solving Model' portrays the 'problems' experienced by a 'client' as an extension of the basic problems of life in general. The social work task is one of helping the client to solve his or her own problems. 'Problems', then, are failures in functioning: the client is encouraged to adapt to the situation by calling upon his or her personal resources. A new norm is established. But such a model can be criticised as lacking depth in terms of psychological and sociological diagnoses of the problem. What has caused the breakdown in the normative and regulative functioning of the client? 'The Psycho-Social Therapy Model' seeks a 'medical' diagnosis. It has, however, been criticised for an over-emphasis upon the psychological and a subsequent neglect of the sociological. 'The Functional Model' has sought to remedy this by emphasising social work intervention as one aspect of an agency's functions: normative functioning is set within a wider system of meaning. In marked contrast, the 'Behaviour-Modification Model' describes a mechanistic relationship between function and norm. It seeks to concentrate resources upon one specific problem rather than spreading

the effort thinly over time and space. 'The Crisis-Intervention Model' and the 'Task-Centred Casework Model' have similar short term and immediate aims. But such approaches isolate problems of functioning and conflict from wider environmental factors and therefore fail to consider norms and rules as a system of meanings. 'Holistic Models' attempt to bring facets of the other models together. However, as Butrym observes with reference to Pincus' and Minahan's "four-systems model", "... it has gone to the other extreme and has sacrificed some of the depth of the considerations which are intrinsic to work with people, ... for the sake of breadth" (1976:37).

In the apparently unceasing process of self-reflection which characterises social work discourse, that profession finds itself treating as its object what is, in fact, its conditions of existence. The 'nature of social work' (69) is sought in the nature of Man and Society. As a consequence, as Foucault says of the human sciences broadly, "They are always animated ... by a sort of transcendental mobility. They never cease to exercise a critical examination of themselves" (1970:364). The next chapter will be looking at another phase of that self-examination in its guise as 'radical social work' but for the moment the important point to note is the line of

69. This is the title of Butrym's text. The dust-jacket suggests: "This book argues that the present lack of consensus about the nature and the functions of social work constitutes a serious problem which, if allowed to continue, will result in loss of purpose and usefulness by social workers. It therefore attempts to answer the question: 'What is social work?'" To ask such a question is, however, to work within the same essentialist framework which the author (Butrym) sees as lacking in consensus. It is the search for the essence of social work in the essence of Man which creates the dilemma.

continuity which, at the epistemological level, represents one of the conditions of existence of social work in Britain. Prior to the Modern episteme conception of Man as that "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" there was no social work discourse. Since the beginning of the 19th century, however, one can trace a discursive regularity, a science of welfare which represents a practical realisation of the social sciences. It is within the terms of this continuity that those processes which others seek to study as the growth and professionalisation of social work and the unification of its many theories and methods must be understood.

(ii) Welfare Discourse and State Intervention. Given the epistemological conditions of existence of social work discourse, the translation of knowledge about Man and Society into practical activity becomes primarily a technical problem. Habermas, speaking about what he sees as the general phenomenon of scientism, argues that "... human behaviour is ... now considered only as the material for science" (1974:43). As a consequence, "... the relationship of theory to praxis can now only assert itself as the purposive-rational application of techniques assured by empirical science" (1974:254). Social work, of course, is often portrayed as an atheoretical pursuit. For every article and letter in professional journals advocating greater emphasis upon firm theories and models and a greater intellectual content in training programmes, there are an equal number emphasising the practical goals of social work, its reliance upon experience, intuition and basic humanitarianism. But such arguments are about the balance between theory and practice. Social work's empiricist basis

is rarely questioned within the profession. Whether the social worker consciously seeks to apply a psycho-social therapy model or merely blunders through on blind intuition, the 'client' is taken as the empirical object of attention. (70) Whether the 'client' is taken as an individual, a family, or a community, makes little difference to that process of objectification by which 'clients' are formulated.

Social work discourse has determinate epistemological conditions of existence. It would be a travesty of this theoretical generalisation to suggest that these conditions are entirely determined by the capitalist relations of production which characterise the British national economy. One might not want to disagree too strongly with Chris Jones' contention that "... social work has emerged as one of the major regulatory strategies of the State ..." in its concern with the non-productive sections of the population (1978:"Abstract"). But one should take issue with his apparent view that this is a phenomenon peculiar to capitalist relations of production. It is a manifest shortcoming amongst Marxist

70. The study of Social Service Teams by Stevenson and Parsloe (1978) confirms the abiding fact that social work clients are individuals, despite major emphases in social work literature on viewing 'the family' or 'the community' as the client and on suggesting 'group work' and 'community work' as viable social work methods. "Virtually all the social workers we interviewed indicated that the most common approach was working with clients on an individual basis and sometimes involving other family members where appropriate" (ibid.:99). "Casework with families seemed to deal with financial and material problems ... The primary emphasis was on the needs of the individual member, identified as having problems ..." (ibid.:103). "None of the social workers interviewed worked exclusively with groups nor was group work regarded by anyone as a substantial part of his method of working" (ibid.:123). "The social workers in our sample were acutely aware of community problems which impinged on their clients and frequently tried to lessen the impact ... by direct negotiations with other agencies ... Yet, none said that this led naturally to incorporating community work ... into their daily work" (ibid.:128).

theorists that any institution found within a social formation based on capitalist relations must, ipso facto, be 'capitalist' in its essential nature. But it is as absurd to argue that a Welfare State is essentially capitalist as it is to suggest that it is synonymous with democracy. (71) There is a tendency for Marxists to be rather more concerned with the demise of 'capitalism' (because with the fall of capitalism, socialism will arise) than with the construction of 'socialism'. The next chapter will examine the dilemma faced by those critics of social work who attempt to construct a Marxist welfare discourse from liberal discourses which they condemn as 'capitalist'. For the moment, it is worth noting Hirst's warning that "There is no distinctly 'socialist' policy or technique in matters of the medical or socially therapeutic manipulation of individuals" (1980:90). "Law defines the status of ... specialist practices and sets limits to the powers of the agents and institutions involved in forms of discipline ..." (ibid.:92). Speaking of the USSR, Hirst suggests that social welfare in that nation is a derivation "... from the sciences and practices developed from the eighteenth century onwards by the European ... bourgeoisie" (ibid.:90).

An examination of welfare discourse in the USSR illustrates the absurdity of portraying 'welfare-in-capitalism' as somehow

71. Robson states boldly that "What is not open to serious question is that a welfare state must be democratic ... the government must have been freely chosen by the citizens ..." (1976:16). Later, Robson specifically excludes the communist nations of Eastern Europe because of their intolerance and totalitarian policies (ibid.:31).

essentially 'capitalist'. (72) As Madison illustrates, income maintenance policy in the Soviet Union is both a mechanism of work incentives and assistance for the non-productive (1973:passim). Given that the wage form of reward for labour predominates in the USSR, welfare policy is directed towards supplementing earned income for the disabled who are able to carry out some labour tasks and of supplying allowances to those unable to work through disability, sickness, pregnancy, or old age. As Mishra says, socialist ideology suggests that the notion - 'to each according to his needs' - is a central tenet of economic organisation under socialist relations of production and distribution (Mishra, 1977:122). But, as Madison shows, the emphasis in the USSR is upon the principle - 'to each according to his work' (1973:100,101). There is no intention here to wander into that area of socialist apologetics which sees the Soviet Union as struggling through a transitional phase between 'capitalism' and 'true' socialism, or communism; suffice it to note that the Soviet Union has a welfare policy which forms one element in a national plan for production. Faced, for example, by chronic labour shortages (Madison, 1973:98) the Soviet Union state has implemented legislation to provide rehabilitation for the disabled; sickness benefits based on length of work career; paid maternity leave; and old age pensions which can be paid even if the recipients remain in employment. (73)

15 isy some 72. It is not, of course, suggested that the USSR represents the ideal in terms of socialist relations of production, simply that it is unlikely, in the estimation of many commentators, to be characterised as an example of capitalist relations of production.

73. For full details, see Madison (1973). Mishra (1977) has a chapter on "Welfare in Socialist Society" (Chapter 7).

Socialist theorists must accept the limitations of Marxist discourse when it comes to providing a critique of welfare and social work in Britain. Capitalist relations of production, as a concept, implies a degree of organisation and control over the definition of the labour force, by the state, through the formal mechanism of public law. On the reverse side of this condition of existence we find social policy legislation which seeks to police idleness - not only the 'work-shy' ('the vagabond') but the unemployed, the unemployable and those who must be retrained or rehabilitated - and to compensate for the anarchic nature of distribution of production and the wage-form reward for labour. Welfare discourse, then, provides some of the conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production in the British national economy. It has to be recognised that the form in which these conditions are provided are, however, largely removed from the commodity form of distribution. (74) Socialist political attention ought, therefore, to be directed towards strategies aimed at a greater degree of democratic control over the activities of welfare agencies, whether they are providing supplementary benefits or social work advice. Towards this end, it is necessary to appreciate what

74. In recent years, British social work journals have witnessed an expanding debate over the issue of private practice in social work (Community Care, December 14th, 1977). Social Work Today, Vol.10, No.15, December 5th 1978, reports on plans being made by BASW to produce guidelines for private practice, and in the issue for September 25th 1979 (Vol.11, No.4) details are given of the guidelines produced by BASW (Private Practice in Social Work). There are, of course, practical limitations to the 'privatisation' of social work: many of that profession's clients accept 'help' under duress (probationers; after-care clients; children under supervision); a great many more could not or would not pay for the services they receive. See also Community Care (18th March 1982) for a report of controversy within BASW over private practice.

have been called the epistemological conditions of existence of welfare discourse; not merely to understand the ways in which such discourse lends support to the ideological conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production but also to appreciate the manner in which such discourse stands in the way of a more democratic control over its functioning. Similarly, it is necessary to take account of the political and legal conditions of existence of welfare discourse. Welfare discourse in the USSR, for example, cannot simply be subsumed by the dictatorial rule of the Communist Party. (75) Income maintenance programmes in the Soviet Union are defined by legal statutes and are subject to legal control and bureaucratic regulation. Disputes over claims to allowances and payments made are subject to these controls and regulations. One might not have much faith in Soviet legal justice but public law in the USSR nevertheless provides an important condition of existence for welfare discourse in that nation.

"For social work", writes Chris Jones, "the period between 1945 and 1977 has been one of momentous change, with the most significant feature being the State's increasing take up of social work " (1978:35). What is significant is not so much the state's "take up of social work" as the state's endorsement of the science of welfare which sustains social work practice. The 1834 Royal Commission rejected the application of a science of welfare by means of the technique of the social enquiry and,

75. Madison reports on the Soviet's dilemma over how to encourage more workers to remain in employment beyond retirement age: "Raising retirement ages was apparently rejected as politically and socially unacceptable. Nor was it considered feasible to lower benefits ... Instead, Soviet policy-makers ..." introduced legislation to allow for the joint payment of pensions and wages (1973:108).

even up to the time of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1905, there remained strong pressure from the Local Government Board (LGB) for the endorsement of the less-eligibility principle. (76)

But we have seen that social enquiry demanded a 'field of surveillance' removed from the artificial panopticism of the poor law institution. The 'geneses of individuals' had significance only when viewed within the wider system of meanings which it formed with analysis of the 'progress of society'. The Charity Organisation Society and other institutions for the dissemination of scientific welfare provided the necessary social enquiry for the communal policing of idleness. And, as Jones says, by the time of the 1905 Royal Commission, the expertise of the COS was acknowledged by the Conservative government through its inclusion of six COS representatives amongst the Commissioners. Interestingly, however, by this time both the COS and the LGB were in open dispute with Fabian socialist moves to dismantle the Poor Law mechanism in favour of a national welfare system and with the subsequent Liberal government reforms which expanded welfare provision outside of the realm of the Poor Laws (Cormack, 1953; Hay, 1975; Rose, 1971:262-3; Fraser, 1978:147). The first two decades of the century witnessed the loss by the COS of "its principal client

76. The words of James Stewart Davy, permanent secretary of the Poor Law Division of the LGB, grace the pages of most histories of the British Welfare State (Woodroffe, 1974:141-2; Fraser, 1978:147). Davy defined less-eligibility as consisting of "... loss of personal reputation ... loss of personal freedom, which is secured by detention in a workhouse, and ... the loss of political freedom by suffering disfranchisement" (quoted by Woodroffe, 1974:141).

group, the deserving poor, to the State" (C. Jones, 1978:25). (77)

State centralisation of welfare provisions provided a uniformity of income maintenance and care at a standard minimum level. It is generally accepted that the thinking of the Liberal reformers, Lloyd George and Churchill for example, was a pragmatic acceptance of 'Bismarckianism': the heading-off of socialist appeal to the 'working classes' through the provision of minimal welfare benefits (Fraser, 1978:151-2; Hay, 1975:36-7). George and Wilding are of the opinion that the views of the Fabian socialists became "the orthodoxies of social administration" (1976:viii). Beatrice Webb's Minority Report for the 1905 Royal Commission emphasised the dismantling of the Poor Law system in favour of a centralised concern by the state for the welfare of all (Cormack, 1953:16). What we witness in the 20th century is a growing political awareness that social enquiry, whether for the general purpose of policing idleness and defining the workforce or for the more specific aim of fighting socialist ideology, required

77. The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905 (5 Ed VII, cap.18) allowed specially constituted distress committees to assist the unemployed to move to areas of higher employment. The Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906 (6 Ed VII, cap.57) empowered Local Authorities to provide school meals for needy children. The Old Age Pensions Act, 1908 (8 Ed VII, cap.40) made pensions for the over 70s immediately available. The National Insurance Act, 1911 (1 and 2 George V, cap.55) made health insurance compulsory and thereby extended sick pay and 'free' medical treatment.

legislative definition and a centralised control of welfare discourse. (78)

The state, then, may well have removed certain clients from both the Poor Law system and from the COS but this reflected an endorsement of social work technique as social investigation. As such, the principle of less-eligibility remained the organising principle of scientific welfare. Thus, the Old Age Pension Act, 1908 withheld payments from "criminals, drunkards and malingerers" (Fraser, 1978:143, footnote). As a non-contributory pension it was, of course, means-tested and the personal circumstances of claimants were investigated by local pensions officers of the Customs and Excise.

Regardless of the location of the agency controlling and supervising welfare provision, the conditions of existence of welfare discourse - economic, political, epistemological or legal - within a determinate social formation maintain important lines of continuity. Thus, we find that the 19th century overseer had duties in common with the 20th century relieving officer (Webb and Webb, 1927:164, footnote). Beresford's handful of interviews with retired relieving officers endorses the view that they saw themselves as forerunners of local

78. Speaking of the Webbs' influence on the Minority Report, Cormack suggests that they were interested less in the ability of the citizen and rather more in the concept of the duties of citizenship (1953:16). As Pinker notes (1979:21), the Webbs "... held a generally poor opinion of 'the average sensual man' and believed enlightened administrators were the most reliable interpreters of what constituted the best interests of the general public". This, of course, is the same 'enlightened administrator' that Macadam's imperialistic social work training was designed to manufacture during this same period. It comes as no surprise to note, then, that the Webbs sought an increasingly disciplined society. They fought the insurance principle because it supposed unconditional right. They expected "an advance in conduct in return for the increased income" their scheme proposed; they wanted an "extension of treatment and disciplinary supervision" (Cormack quoting from Our Partnership, 1953:16).

authority social workers (1969:721-2). (79) And though it might be argued that the Poor Law relieving officer probably had more in common with later state officials concerned with income maintenance rather than the amorphous role of the modern social worker, it is worth noting the view of a Political and Economic Planning publication of 1937 that "... the major task of the Unemployment Assistance Board is to assist, and to promote the welfare of the households of married men suffering from long-term unemployment (1937:139). In similar fashion, the Social Security Act, 1966 empowers the Supplementary Benefits Commission to exercise its functions "in such a manner as shall best promote the welfare of persons" affected by the Act (Picton, 1975:footnote 1). Picton's article, which appeared in the British Journal of Social Work, describes courses for Unemployment Review Officers which offered "an introduction to social and psychological influences on human behaviour" (ibid.:441). (80) One cannot ignore the consequences of legislative changes which draw demarcations between a basically income-maintenance system operated by a department of state and a social work service under the general responsibility of local

79. Both the Mackintosh Report on Social Workers in the Mental Health Services (1951:para.38(c)) and the Younghusband Report on Social Workers in the Local Authority Health and Welfare Services (1959:para.457), found ex-relieving officers in local authority posts doing mental welfare work. See also Rodgers and Dixon who, in their study of the social services in a northern town, found the mental health section of the local authority being run by two ex-relieving officers whilst the town's ex-public assistance officer was the Director of the welfare services department (1960:45,86).

80. Picton, a lecturer in social work, comments "that many SB staff operating in an extremely complex organization are able to make relationships and achieve results that stand comparison with what social workers do" (1975:442). And see "Human relations training for supplementary benefits work", Harwood and Mason (1978).

authorities, but it is apparent that welfare discourse is common to both. (81)

There is, then, a continuity which refuses to recognise the claim that the Poor Law has finally been laid to rest, despite its symbolic removal from the statutes in 1948. We find Supplementary Benefits officers stereotyped, according to Picton, as "harsh, insensitive, punitive, judgemental" (1975:441) and we find residents of a DHSS re-establishment centre complaining "This place is like a bloody prison!" (Sharron, 1980:2). (82) But we also find in Stuart Rees' study of the views of social work clients, feelings of stigmatisation ("Every time you've got to go to a department like that you begin to feel degraded", 1978:75) and of resignation ("Most clients expect little. Their polite beliefs that everyone had their place, that if benefits existed they'd get to hear of them, were a monument to a system of socialization which welfare-state services had not displaced", 1978:37). In addition, commentators who have studied reports prepared by social workers and probation officers for criminal courts often emphasise

81. See Evans' review of Stevenson's Claimant or Client? A Social Worker's View of the Supplementary Benefits Commission and Jordan's Poor Parents : Social Policy and the Cycle of Deprivation (1975) for a discussion of conflicting views about this commonality.

82. The residential centres in question, described by the Claimants' Union as "glorified workhouses", are designed to rehabilitate long term unemployed persons who have lost the will to work. No specific job training is provided. Under Section 10 of the Supplementary Benefits Act, 1976 an appeals tribunal can make further benefit payments dependent upon attendance at a re-establishment centre. Many of those who attend do so voluntarily but under threat of having benefit payments stopped should they decline the offer. Length of stay depends upon assessment of readiness for employment. The residents who had complained to Social Work Today resented the petty regulations (no shave - no breakfast; no lingering in toilets; compulsory Friday afternoon shower; indoors by 11 p.m.) (Sharron, 1980).

their tendency to offer value judgements thinly disguised as professional assessments (Bean, 1976:105; Curran, 1982:passim). But the continuity lies not so much in the principle of less-eligibility as in the welfare discourse which transforms political, social, economic and ideological questions into technical problems. In his inaugural lecture in 1951, Titmuss acknowledged that the ideas and methods of the Poor Law era had been transplanted into the new social services. But the target for Titmuss' critique was the prevailing tendency to concentrate upon 'individual disorders' to the neglect of the 'real' "underlying causes in the family or social groups" (quoted by Handler, 1973:49). Both liberal and radical critics of social work dwell upon individual casework as social work's most obvious tendency to neglect 'structural issues', 'environmental factors' or 'power relationships'. Unfortunately, the proffered solutions invariably involve consideration of individuals-in-groups (the family; group work; community work). Ultimately, the object of social work discourse is Man: Man as a family member, working in groups, living in communities. Socialists should be concerned to understand how issues involving moral and value judgements are presented as technical problems to be solved by professional workers with scientific knowledge and skills. 'From each according to his ability' is a principle about which calculations and decisions have to be made, as does the other side of that equation - 'to each according to needs'. These are problems to be faced and for which resolutions must be sought: resolution does not come about simply by demanding socialist relations of production in place of capitalist relations.

The growing involvement of the state in welfare discourse is part of a wider process in which the state acts as a co-ordinating and organising condition of existence of capitalist relations of production and distribution. The state brings order in the face of the anarchy and hedonism of capitalist competition: an order which, ideologically, the free market ought to ultimately guarantee. The state arranges "ordered multiplicities" by replacing heterogeneous and detailed systems of income maintenance with a homogeneous system of minimalist income maintenance which can cope with crises of depression and high unemployment. But the state also endorses a system of social enquiry which polices both the edges of the income maintenance mechanism where 'scroungers' and fraudulent claimants reside, and the other, residual, categories of persons who fall beyond the reach of other social institutions (children in trouble or in need; criminals; the mentally and physically inadequate). Social work is a facet of a knowledge-power relation: it is the "infinitely small of political power".

5. Summarising Discussion

"The 'welfare' state reflects a change in policy objectives, not a change in the economic parameters to which policy is directed. The laissez-faire New Poor Law involved a massive investment in its institutions and their operation (it was moreover an investment which singularly failed to achieve the policy objectives set). (Cutler et al., 1978:250)

The Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 rejected a science of welfare, based upon social enquiry of claimants for relief remaining within the

community, and attempted to substitute a revived "economy of suspended rights" through a policy of panoptic incarceration. Welfare discipline, as a discursive regularity within a knowledge-power relation, polices idleness through a utilization of the social scientific conceptions of Man and Society. But the panopticism of the workhouse test was clearly unable to cope with the cycles of economic depression which created vast numbers of unemployed and the general flow of workers from region to region searching for employment. Panoptic 'discipline' lacked effectivity as a general policy for the policing of idleness because it relied entirely upon the deterrent value of the workhouse test. The epistemological conditions of welfare discourse necessitated the treatment of individuals, within an historicist framework, as both constituted by, and constitutors of, the historical development of Society. The science of welfare demanded an understanding of the relative nature of needs and desires: relative both in terms of human functioning and the conflict of desires. The science of welfare met the demand for the construction of norms and rules: it interpreted the significance of heterogeneity within a conception of a social system based upon homogeneity.

At the beginning of the 19th century, a form of social enquiry outside the realm of the Poor Laws was practised by charitable agencies which sought to institute a system which related benefit to individual needs based upon detailed investigation but which also sought not merely to deter but to prevent destitution and its consequences. The process of social investigation of the individual (the constitution of a 'file') and the generalisation of that knowledge into an art of prevention and

an act of police (the creation of a 'case'), is the process of what Foucault calls "normalization". It is not a process of regimentation and standardisation as in Huxley's 'brave new world' but one in which individual difference is measured and catalogued relative to a norm which is, as it were, the average of individualities. In such a system, the "infinitely small" detail has a significance in relation to the whole by which it is measured. Towards the end of the century, the Charity Organisation Society began a self-conscious process of perfection of the science of the social enquiry. The later 19th century witnessed a partnership of public and private systems of income maintenance contributing to the ideological conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production. Needs and desires, within capitalist relations of production, must be satisfied for those without capital or property through the sale of labour power. Systems of income maintenance must, therefore, ensure that those unable to sell labour power, temporarily (children; the sick) or permanently (the insane; the disabled and infirm), are maintained without diverting them or others away from the labour market. To the extent that capitalist relations of production require, as conditions of their existence, legal and ideological mechanisms to ensure an available labour force, the principle of less-eligibility, legally and ideologically endorsed and enforced, constitutes a condition of existence of those relations of production.

Welfare discipline, and its form as the science of welfare within capitalist relations of production, is an aspect in the wider definition and control of the labour force: welfare science polices idleness.

But this is not to argue either that welfare and social work institutions are determined in their form and effectivity by 'capitalists' or 'capitalism', or that welfare discipline is one facet of a homogeneous 'capitalist disciplinary hegemony'.

As in other chapters, the valuable and inspirational insights developed by Foucault, which culminate in his concept of 'discipline', have been utilized whilst rejecting Foucault's tendency in

Discipline and Punish to allow that concept to hegemonise the whole of discourse on social formations with capitalist relations of production. (83) It is not, of course, being argued that there cannot exist common conditions of existence for disparate discursive formations. Quite the reverse. Following Foucault, this chapter has sought to identify what has been described as the epistemological conditions of existence of specific social formations with determinate relations of production. But it has not allowed these conditions to

83. Although Foucault's texts have never been unequivocally Marxist oriented and have recently been patronised by an anti-Marxist intelligentsia in Paris, the theme of Discipline and Punish clearly appeals to Marxists who believe that the 'capitalist' national economies of the West have been hegemonised by 'bourgeois' ideology, politics and law. It is a theme to be found in historical analyses such as that of Stedman Jones' in which "The policeman and the workhouse were not sufficient. The respectable and the well-to-do had to win the 'hearts and minds' of the masses ..." (1973/4:466).

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dictate forms and presume continuities. (84) To illustrate the issue at hand, this chapter has sought to describe two interesting lines of discontinuity in 19th century welfare discourse. Friendly Societies were a form of mutual insurance for those in the labour force who could afford to make regular contributions to insure against loss of wages because of illness or old age (and, often, strikes). In form, they maintained a degree of democratic control which contrasted markedly with commercial insurance companies founded on finance capital. Ultimately, the relevance of the Friendly Society was simply surpassed when the state took full responsibility for the organisation and control of funds within a National Insurance scheme. Friendly Societies could not compete in the market with commercial companies offering better and more secure benefits. In addition to maintaining a degree of independence both from the state and the capitalist sector, however, Friendly Societies provide an interesting study of a welfare form which was not hegemonised by the growing body of social work discourse which

84. Foucault's works as a whole provide justification for suggesting a continuity of discourses as a unitary knowledge-power relation. It was Thomas Bernard, in the 19th century, who exclaimed "The man who first made a practical use of the division of labour ... did not do more essential service to mechanical than Dr Bell has done to intellectual operations ... The principle in manufactories and in schools is the same" (quoted by David Owen, 1965:117). But, this thesis maintains, the continuity resides in the social scientific understanding of Man which became a feature within the Modern episteme. It is this regularity which is opened up by Foucault's many genealogical studies and which this thesis attempts to reveal within welfare discourse. But this does not constitute a homogeneous knowledge-power relation which has hegemonised all discourse. This is a process of explanation from which socialists should distance themselves. Discursive regularities, such as social work, must be understood in their particular specific forms and degrees of effectivity within determinate social formations if this understanding is to prove of assistance to socialist political action.

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sought to allocate benefits based on investigatory knowledge. Neither the liberal view that the Friendly Societies form an integral root of the blossoming Welfare State, nor the radical view that they represent an instance of 'working class' initiative 'incorporated' into 'bourgeois' culture, are particularly supported by an analysis of Friendly Societies in the British national economy.

The second line of discontinuity examined in this chapter is that of the phenomenon of industrial welfare. Given particular encouragement by the central government during the war of 1914-18, social work theorists and educationalists cast it very much as a branch of social work. In the event, the hollow left by the retreat of state concern after the war and the failure of social work pedagogues to retain a firm hold over the industrial realm was filled by an alternative discourse - personnel management. Despite the occasional appearance of personnel management in texts aiming for comprehensiveness rather than clarity in their cover of the social services, (85) discourse on personnel management subsumes certain aspects of welfare discourse and subordinates it beneath a discourse on work discipline and motivation. Social work discourse did not, then, hegemonise the realm of the work place. This is not to argue that it could not, although there were political and economic reasons

85. Younghusband did not include personnel management in her 1978 follow up study of her analyses of social work in Britain of 1947 and 1951 but Randall's British Social Services does. "Personnel managers are not social workers", writes Randall, "... but are included in this chapter since they have a welfare function ..." (1981:232).

why it did not. The imperialistic potential of social work discourse has been alluded to in this chapter. The work place, much as any other in which large numbers of people gather together, (86) may provide an avenue of expansion for the social work profession. However, the legal and cultural conditions of existence of welfare often determine that social work clients are, by definition, those without the financial resources to 'buy' their way out of trouble, (87) despite Younghusband's belief that "... the personal and social problems and needs ..." with which social workers deal "... are found within all income groups ..." (1959:para.631). (88)

In a national economy in which personal welfare depends largely upon personal wealth it is inevitable that the majority of those who cannot maintain personal welfare are those with little or no wealth. The science of welfare has been absorbed, since the 19th century, in the effort to find a technical solution to the problem of why, in

86. "The first civilian social worker has been appointed to a senior post in the Royal Navy's personal and family service, paving the way for the appointment of other qualified social workers ... The appointment follows the recommendations of the ... naval welfare committee (chaired by Lord Seeborn) ... bringing an end to the social worker posts being occupied by retired naval personnel" (Report in Social Work Today, 14th August 1979). And see "Caring for the professionals", an article on social work with the armed forces, in Social Work Today, 6th May 1980: 12-14.

87. For example: by hiring assistance to care for the home or to look after children or a sick or dependent relative; by purchasing psychiatric support on a regular basis; by travelling regularly to see friends and relatives; by being able to keep the home warm and healthy; by being able to purchase nourishing food regularly; and so on.

88. In a report advocating 'generic' social work, a plea for social work as general practice welfare was inevitable. "We ... hope that in time the social work services ... will be used by all who need them irrespective of income, class or occupation" (1959:para.631).

general terms, it is particular sections of the propertyless majority of the population who fail to maintain themselves. Consequently, given the scientific orientation of the way in which this question is framed, and solutions sought, knowledge is required about individuals and their deviations from the norm: norms of individual functioning, but also norms of familial and cultural functioning. Training social workers is, therefore, the inculcation of social scientific knowledge of norms and rules, meanings and systems. It is a knowledge which:

"... refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal [...] In short, it normalizes" (Foucault, 1977:183).

The following chapter will examine in more detail that knowledge-power relation which, in the present century, has witnessed increased state involvement in the definition, control and development of social work discourse and the science of welfare.

CHAPTER 7

The Crisis in Traditional Social Work Discourse
and the Radical Alternative

1. Introduction

It is the constellation of concepts - capitalist relations of production, the Modern episteme, and the science of welfare, for example - which form what have been called, in this thesis, continuities. The analysis of the British national economy in terms of capitalist relations of production and epistemological conditions of existence, identifies a determinate discursive regularity - the science of welfare - as a continuity. One facet of that discourse - social work - has been discussed in terms of its general form, for example, its dependence upon social scientific categories, and in terms of its specific content, for example, the control of vagrancy and the organisation of charitable endeavour. The previous chapter sought to illustrate that the identification of welfare discourse is not the identification of a necessary continuity, for example, in the case of industrial welfare, and that the identification of one form for the policing of idleness - the Friendly Society - is not necessarily the identification of scientific welfare discourse. This chapter continues the analysis of discourse on social work by identifying further lines of continuity linking the discourse of the previous two chapters to contemporary social work issues. Finally, in this and the concluding chapter, ways are suggested in which 'radical social work' discourse can be conceived as a further facet of the continuity in question and suggests how that continuity might be fractured to form a socialist interpretation of

discourse on welfare and the policing of idleness.

(i) A Crisis of Confidence. Over the past ten years, the growing optimism amongst politicians and practitioners about social science's potential for social engineering has taken a decisive reversal. British criminology throughout the century has been closely associated with social policy and the search for the 'causes' of criminal behaviour. This discourse has been interwoven with welfare discourse in a ceaseless correlation between criminal behaviour and specific features of 'working class' life. The 'failure of treatment' literature which began to appear in the 1970s has been primarily aimed at a revelation of the failure to 'cure' deviant behaviour, with obvious implications for social work discourse. In the USA, programmes designed to attack the causes of crime and to ameliorate poverty and inequality have, research suggests, failed. In Britain, the failure of the 'IMPACT' probation treatment experiment has had obvious implications for the concept of probation as an aspect of social work intervention in the lives of offenders, ⁽¹⁾ whilst two years earlier, the Maria Colwell Report had drawn public attention to a

1. The scene was initially set by the mammoth publication - Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment - A Survey of Treatment Evaluation Studies - by Lipton, Martinson and Wilks (Praeger, 1975). Segal had, however, already published a review of literature on "social work therapeutic intervention" in 1972, producing equivocal findings pointing strongly "in the negative direction" (1972:15). By 1978, Fischer's review of treatment programmes in social work, psychotherapy, corrections, psychiatric hospitalisation and education, suggested that the results of social work intervention were amongst the least successful (1978:218). The results of the British 'IMPACT' (Intensive Matched Probation and After-Care Treatment) programme were published in the same year as the Home Office Research Unit study by Brody - The Effectiveness of Sentencing (1976) which endorsed the 'nothing works' message of the American literature.

failure in the child care network. Against this background, social work journals have featured a stream of articles and letters questioning the bases and fundamental principles, the functions and the quality of training, of social work. (2) Such questioning, however, often ends in reconfirmation that social work is, after all, 'on the right tracks' and all that is required is more time and a tightening up of its technical apparatus. In an editorial for the British Association of Social Workers' journal, Social Work Today, for example, Terry Bamford notes that despite the immense growth in the influence and power of the profession, social workers are "depressed, disillusioned and disaffected" (Bamford, 1977). Bamford lists some of the scapegoats often blamed for "this sorry state" but his discussion of social work's "disarray" is a perfunctory act, a preamble to a reconfirmation that "social work is a skilled activity", a profession with "a recognisable body of knowledge and skill". "Despite the widespread gloom there are some signs that the tide is now receding" (ibid.). One of these signs, apparently, is the BASW publication - The Social Work Task - which identifies "the specific social work function". That document, in fact, provides a definition of social work described by one lecturer in social work as being "so

2. For example: "Does social work education work?", Social Work Today (July 26th, 1977); "Is social work necessary?", Community Care (January 10th, 1980); "Who needs fieldwork training?", Community Care (September 20th, 1979); "What we have to do to shift the image of social workers ...", Social Work Today (June 17th, 1980); "How training may 'unfit' people", Social Work Today (September 20th, 1977, a paper read at a BASW conference - 'Who needs social work?'); "On the unpopularity of social work", Community Care (June 25th, 1981).

broad and general as to be meaningless" (Milner, 1980:20). (3)

This self-examination of social work discourse displays what Burton and Carlen describe as the discursive redemption of legitimisation deficits (1979:138; passim). The Maria Colwell Report, for example, adopts the empiricist tradition which Burton and Carlen note epitomises the approach of the Royal Commission: witnesses are heard; evidence is taken; judgement passed. Thereafter, "techniques of negation" are used to explain how things 'went wrong' (ibid.:112 et seq.). First "material negation": the state cannot simply assume responsibility for children in need but must also provide the resources. Secondly, "empiricist subjectivism": mistakes of judgement were made by certain individuals. Finally, "fraternal critique": provided in the Maria Colwell case by Olive Stevenson's Minority Report which marginalised the "empiricist subjectivism" component of the main body of the Report. Ultimately, however, the Report 'blamed' the amorphous realm of "the system": training; administration; planning; liaison and supervision. Thus, whilst stating unequivocally that a great deal of re-thinking about child care was overdue, such a re-think was cast more in line with the efficiency of systems than with the

3. The definition suggested was:

"Social work is the purposeful and ethical application of personal skills in interpersonal relationships directed towards enhancing the personal and social functioning of an individual, family, group or neighbourhood, which necessarily involves using evidence obtained from practice to help create a social environment conducive to the well-being of all" (BASW, 1977:para.3.17).

The working party acknowledged that its brief was "... so enormous and complex that this report should not be seen as a final definitive statement of what social work is ..." (1977:para.1.6). Presumably implying that, given time, such a statement could be made.

relevance of theory and practice. (4)

Olsen also adopts "techniques of negation" in an article based on his inaugural lecture ("Social work under siege") when he outlines seven major criticisms levelled at social work. Olsen castigates such criticisms because of their unscientific bases: "... few are founded on objective analysis. At best they rely upon impressionistic research confounded with statistical and methodological inadequacies" (1981:16). Olsen also outlines seven possible explanations for "the bad press and public reproach", amongst which one might note: social work's role as "conscience of society" and consequent association with society's residuum (as Davies (1981) puts it, social workers "are judged by the company they keep"); the complexity of the various statutory tasks allocated to local authority social work and social service departments; "the poverty of resources"; and the "dubious knowledge base" of social work (Olsen, 1981:16-7). But, for Olsen, the two most prominent problems for social work are: "... the consistent failure to measure the performance of the individual social worker, or of the profession as a whole, in meeting stated objectives ..." and "... the adverse consequences of concentrating on theoretical models rather than on constructing a methodology for analysing the facts and prescribing action" (ibid.:17). Without such

4. The Colwell Report was forecast and subsequently interpreted as an attack on social work(ers). It does, nevertheless, provide 'evidence' in a form which allows commentators to utilize a "material negation": 'pressure of work' and 'lack of resources'. Both reactions are commonplace whenever social work effectiveness is questioned. See, for example, the discussion of criticism of social work services by the Scottish judiciary following the integration of the Probation Service into generic Social Work Departments, in Curran (1982: "General Introduction").

rigid guides to action, social work will always respond to changes in theoretical and political fashion: "... social work must involve itself in the search for accuracy and embark on greater experimentation. It must also continue in its search, and develop its own knowledge base ..." (ibid.).

Such soul-searching articles invariably reject their own invitations to an open discussion of the 'validity claims' of social work discourse. Practical questions of a moral and political nature are relegated to relativism or are ruled 'out of court' entirely, whilst theoretical questions are reduced to a consideration of social work technology. For example, Martin Davies' series of articles for Community Care, which questioned the validity of the assessment procedures on social work training courses (Davies, 1979), was quickly met by very defensive replies from CCETSW, BASW and two eminent social work educators (Priscilla Young, 1979; Cypher, 1979; Parsloe and Stevenson, 1979). Parsloe and Stevenson tackle the representativeness of Davies' sample of education establishments and Young picks up the same point in her contribution. Parsloe and Stevenson also outline what social work educators are doing to improve the assessment of "demonstrable competence". (5) These 'improvements'

5. There are noticeable parallels between these new methods and social work practice. For example: "A search for ways of getting behind the recommendations of field teachers and tutors to the facts about a student's ... work". Recommendations parallel 'presenting problems' as the surface manifestation of deeper issues. This 'method' is broken down into what amounts to 'contract work', that is, written agreements between student (client?), the academic and field teacher (therapist; social worker?) about what is to be done; 'self-examination' by the student through a written account of what has been done and learned; the 'personal interview' in which the student is orally examined and the examiner has reports from the field teacher.

are, however, technical innovations: a widening and improvement of the means of evaluation without tackling the fundamental issue raised by Davies - what is being evaluated? There are, notes Davies, social work educators who feel that social work is so amorphous that they could rarely justify failing any student who had tried. Given the epistemological conditions of existence of social work discourse, theories or methods grounded in the constituent models of the social sciences can always be complemented or criticised by others but never entirely superseded. No perspective in social work is ever completely on the wrong track; there are merely degrees of rightness and wrongness and prestige often depends on having a wide grasp of alternative perspectives. Self-doubt in social work discourse is a function of its epistemological formation and usually ends on a note of optimism given that there is always an alternative perspective to fall back upon. For Olsen, then, "The truth of social work will remain a tree of slow growth". For Davies, "There is ... a great deal of confusion, but the careful observer can begin to see and feel new shapes emerging" (1979:25). (6)

Social work apologists rely heavily upon the view that such work requires specific and special skills and methods which distinguishes

6. Although social work has had to face set-backs from the present Tory government, there is little reason for the profession's pessimism concerning its public image. Roberts suggests that the press does not so much 'bash' social work as relegate it and he attributes this, in part, to reluctance in social work to enter into debates through the media (1980:17; and see Hills, "How the press see you", Social Work Today, 20th May, 1980). A recent national opinion survey commissioned by the Barclay Committee, whilst suggesting that the public valued social workers less than doctors, policemen and Citizen's Advice Bureau workers, also suggested that "The public's attitude is almost unambiguously favourable" (Weir, 1981:216).

social work from other activities. Twentieth century developments in social work discourse are to be examined in the sections which follow, particularly in terms of what is called the unification of social work.

2. Genericism, Essentialism, Scientism

Numerous commentators have argued that social work occupies a particularly unusual and often stressful position in the realm of individual and social values. Writers such as Plant (1970) and Halmos (1978) cast the issue in terms of what has been discussed in this thesis as the "ontological gulf" between individual and society. Both are concerned, for example, about the appropriate balance between individual freedom and the 'demands' of society. Halmos in particular has attacked those who would use social work politically. (7) Social work, for Olsen, occupies a position "... where outer and inner needs meet to bear on the individual" (1981:17); a position, he believes, which is apt to lead to the false belief that social work is omnipotent. As Davies puts it, simply, "... the tendency of social workers to claim too much for themselves" (1981:12). Davies, however, believes that such over-enthusiasm can be mitigated by "improved training and recruitment policies" and, thereby, neglects the numerous other conditions of formation of social work discourse. As Olsen notes, there

7. Hence the dichotomies in the title of Halmos' book - The Personal and the Political. Social Work and Political Action. "Equilibration" and "caution" are advocated by Halmos, largely because he works on a continuum which casts the political and the "exclusively socialised" at one extreme and the personal and individualized at the other.

are some "54 Acts, regulating Acts and rules governing social work practice" (1981:17). Whilst in what follows these legal conditions will receive scant attention, it must be emphasised that they cannot be divorced from any analysis which examines social work discourse.

(i) Generic Social Work: A Family Service. Social work's 'hard times' are often attributed to the Seebohm Report of 1968 and the subsequent generic social services departments. As a New Society editorial notes: "... swelling demand, staff turnover and the expertise required to do the task well, have caused a reaction against Seebohm's 'generic' concept" (2nd October, 1975). Additionally, it is argued that rapid expansion of local authority social work and social services departments has resulted in the creation of a bureaucratic machinery which alienates clients from social workers and social workers from their own hierarchy.

One of the aims of the Seebohm Committee, was the amalgamation of the various personal social services into a coherent family and community service. It is a commonplace criticism of social work to suggest that it concentrates on the problems of individuals whilst ignoring the relevance of the dynamics of the family and the influence of the social environment. (8) This, however, is something of a red-herring which has allowed social work discourse to operate upon the same

8. Liberal theorists tend to talk about 'the environment' as a residual category implying almost anything lying outside the person of the individual, whereas radical theorists talk about 'structural determinants', a pervasive concept which allows anything lying outside the person of the individual to be used to dominate him in the name of 'the system'.

principles of content whilst arguing that it has developed important and radical new avenues of intervention through, for example, group work and community work. Butrym (1976:2-3), amongst others, has argued that the significance of the "psychiatric deluge" on British social work has been exaggerated. There are, however, important contrasts in the treatment of the client-as-individual which are lost when compounded in this kind of environment/individual dichotomy. First, there is the approach which identifies problems of normative functioning within the individual and a remedy is sought, perhaps, by inducing a personality change in the client. It is this picture of the "psychiatric deluge" which Woodroffe portrays in the chapter she heads by that phrase (1974:118-47) and which Butrym considers not particularly appropriate to British social work. But, secondly, there is the approach which is illustrated by the view of Florence Hollis who, according to Handler (1973:8), accepted the reality of environmental factors but felt it was a basic presumption of casework that the client "can almost always do something about his problem and that the worker's task is to increase his capacity to do so". Problems, then, may be structural but the client must be encouraged to find ways of coping and making changes within the existing regulative framework. Thirdly, there is the approach advocated by Leonard (1975: passim) in which the client's false consciousness is liberated through the educational process of "conscientization". From this perspective, problems reside in the environment (structure) but contaminate the individual consciousness: the function/conflict set has significance only within the system of norms and rules by which the individual is

alienated. (9)

All such approaches share an ontology of the individual and his relation to the world and an epistemological framework through which this relationship is interpreted. It is a fundamental argument of this thesis that this ontology and its accompanying epistemologies have a great deal in common. The balance sought between emphasising the pathology of the individual or the dysfunctions of the environment; the attempts to bring them together, to bridge the "ontological gulf", or to treat them 'dialectically'; all such approaches amount to variations on a common epistemological theme. To castigate social work for concentrating on the individual may have moral and political benefits but it does little to advance socialist understanding of social work discourse and its democratisation. Unfortunately, for many radical theorists the logical consequence of criticising social work's individualism is to move analysis to the next most complex institution. If not the individual, then the family; if not the family, then the community; and so on and upwards to the amorphous social structure.

Younghusband, in her chapter on "A Family Service: Foreshadowings of Seeborn" (1978, Vol.I:227), illustrates how, over a number of years, government reports and White Papers had pointed towards the desirability of integrating the personal social services into a comprehensive family service. What is particularly noteworthy, however,

9. For completeness, one might mention the position represented in the CCETSW discussion paper Values in Social Work (1976:paras.3.01-02) which seems to suggest that either one can consider the individual or one can consider society and that the former is a liberal perspective and the latter is a collectivist position.

in documents such as Social Work and the Community, for Scotland and Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (Seebohm Report), for England and Wales, is not so much the emphasis upon the family ⁽¹⁰⁾ as upon the rational integration of services which, in interaction with wider 'community' resources, would provide more efficient and economic services with preventive potential. ⁽¹¹⁾

This emphasis represents a line of continuity, forming a link with 19th century concern over the 'dangerous classes' of under and unemployed who occupied the slums of the major cities. In the Younghusband Report (1959), discussion centres on "problem families" (para.316); in the Seebohm Report, discussion concerns "problem areas" (para.486); and by 1972, Sir Keith Joseph was using the concept of the 'cycle of deprivation' and a programme of research, funded by the Social Science Research Council, was begun into 'transmitted deprivation' (Younghusband, 1978, Vol.2:157).

10. The Seebohm Committee record their belief: "We could only make sense of our task by considering also childless couples and individuals without any close relatives: in other words, everybody" (para.32).

11. The White Paper - Social Work and the Community argues: "In order to provide better services and to develop them economically it seems necessary that the local authority services ... be brought within a single organisation" (1966:para.10). And, in speaking of the co-ordinating role of the proposed social work departments, the Paper notes the need for "... the improvement and promotion of measures which would help both to prevent the occurrence of these problems and to enable communities and individuals more readily to surmount problems and resolve tensions by their own efforts" (para.13). The Seebohm Report speaks of the notion of a community as implying "... the existence of a network of reciprocal social relationships, which among other things ensure mutual aid ..." (1968:para.476). The Report identifies two forms of pathological community which might manifest delinquent behaviour: those in which there is "little sense of community" and those in which there is a strong community sense but the dominant values are delinquent.

Discourse on deprivation represents an interesting interweaving of the concepts of prevention, individual and social pathology and the community. The family appears as the institutional link within this discourse in its various forms because it is the vehicle which transmits genetic and cultural mutation. It is the Local Authority Social Services Act, 1970 and the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968 which provide the legal conditions of existence of social work discourse on deprivation and its eradication and they represent a political and legal legitimization of social work discourse broadly.

It is, of course, commonplace to argue that, as a means of policing the 'dangerous classes', philanthropic effort was directed towards inculcating the ideal of the 'bourgeois family'. Stedman Jones argues that "this middle-class onslaught" failed but that working class culture developed its own brand of conservatism "oriented towards the family and the home" (1973/4:471 et seq.). Donzelot's view is that both the 'bourgeois' and the 'working class' family were transformed, within the 19th century, through "the propagation ... of medical, educative, and relational norms" but, for the 'bourgeois' family, this was a purposeful act designed to protect their children, whilst for the 'working class' family, order was imposed (1980:xx-xxi). The 'working class' family was reorganised "in terms of socio-economic urgencies" (ibid.:26). In both theses, the denouement is the 'incorporation' of the 'working class'.

Within social work discourse, the concept of the 'problem family' encapsulates: a concern with the minimisation of economic costs arising

within a social formation with capitalist relations of production and a system of distribution determined by contribution rather than need; a concern to police idleness through the calculation of individuality and normality. A concept such as the 'cycle of deprivation' represents the discursive product of a social science eclecticism which weds theories about genetic deterioration with theories concerning psychological and cultural deterioration. Such a union results in notions such as the 'culture of poverty' and the 'deviant sub-culture'. Deprivation, as a multiplex phenomenon, contaminates, ossifies, degenerates. Unchecked, it multiplies costs. The depraved contaminate housing and the environment: deprived environments contaminate the depraved. Social work intervention, then, is seen as a holding operation - a family which breaks up becomes more costly in terms of local authority child care facilities, for example, than a family which can be kept together. But its preventive potential is also explored. Prevention or, at least, amelioration of the cycle of deprivation would have definite economic and ideological benefits. Welfare discourse on the family is less about the policing of families than about the policing of idleness. The 'problem family' represents the extremity, the residuum, for a science of welfare which seeks not so much to classify into 'normal' and 'abnormal' but, rather, to allocate positions within a homogeneous social body in terms of degrees of normality. Within the Modern episteme, knowledge proceeds not, as in the Classical age, through the discovery of identities and differences, but through analogy and succession.

The "psychiatric deluge" represents a change in content of social

work discourse in the early 20th century. This was a change with specific consequences, for example for clients, but it does not represent a change in the epistemological conditions of formation of social work discourse but simply a movement in emphasis of its constituent models. (12) Long before Sir Keith Joseph spoke of "... personality factors arising from illness or accident or genetic endowment ... And ... factors which affect patterns of child rearing" (quoted by Cannan, 1975:116-7), the Board of Education, Board of Control, Joint Committee on Mental Deficiency was tracing "the external frontier of the abnormal" (Foucault, 1977:183). Written in 1929, the Committee's Report covers the familiar parameters of Younghusband's "problem families" and Seeborn's "problem areas" as well as the rationale for the Community Development Projects.

12. At various points Woodroffe contrasts social work discourse of the 19th century with that from the 20th century, usually noting the moral tone of the former and the scientific basis of the latter (though she is not oblivious of the continuity they form, 1974:51-2). For example, she contrasts the treatment by the Charity Organisation Society of a case with one in 1948. In the former case from 1883, a client's desire to change employment was supported because of his good "character" and the belief that his desire was neither frivolous nor fraudulent. In the 1948 case, a client's desire to change employment was resisted, personality tests suggesting the client had a "character disturbance" and that his desire was pathological (ibid.:118-9). Again, in discussing a comparative study of case records from 1904 and 1934, Woodroffe describes as a significant change the discussion of personality and family relationships in 1934, in contrast to the discussion of material conditions and behaviour in 1904 ('cleanliness'; 'honesty'; 'sobriety') (ibid.:139). The impact of such discourses is not being underestimated here. Wootton's major fault in her campaign against "the lamentable arrogance of the language" of social work (1959:279; 1980) is to have judged the gap between what social workers say and what they do as unproblematic. However, whether from 1883, 1904 or 1948, social work discourse specifies: an ontology of Man which defines 'suitable cases for treatment' (change); an epistemology which prescribes a method (social enquiry); and a system which normalises (treatment; intervention)! In fact, the 'moral judgements' from 1904 manifest themselves unambiguously in the language of the social enquiry reports prepared by social workers for criminal courts (Curran, 1982).

Dividing imbecility into primary amentia (genetically induced) and secondary amentia (environmentally induced), the Committee were of the view that primary amentia was the last stage in a process of family degeneration which formed "a vicious circle" with poor environmental conditions (1929, Part III:paras.92,93). "Let us assume", suggests the Report:

"... that we could segregate ... all the families in this country containing mental defectives of the primary amentia type. We should find ... a most interesting social group ... as everyone who has extensive practical experience of social service would readily admit ... insane persons, epileptics, paupers, criminals (especially recidivists), unemployables, habitual slum dwellers, prostitutes, inebriates and other social inefficients. The overwhelming majority of the families thus collected will belong to that section of the community which we propose to term the 'social problem' or 'subnormal' group. This group comprises approximately the lowest 10 per cent in the social scale of most communities " (Part III:para.91).

Elsewhere in the Report, the Committee clearly associate large concentrations of the 'subnormal group' with "rural areas with a poor type of inhabitant" and "slum districts" (1929, Part II:para.91).

The Committee's Report reflects what it is that, in terms of epistemology and ontology, conditions the existence of the social sciences. Rising within the realm of the purely biological, mental illness is referred to an analytic of finitude - what Man is in his normality requires an analysis of that dark area wherein lie the boundaries that "define difference in relation to all other differences" - the Report seeks "to prevent the racial disaster of mental deficiency" (Part III:para.93). The cycle of deprivation

describes concentric circles. But at once such an analysis must seek after origins: "Prevention ... is concerned not with end results but with ... remote antecedents" (ibid.). Mental deficiency must, then, be placed within a history of Man's ontogenesis and phylogenesis. It concerns a discourse on the interaction of functions and norms, desires and rules and it requires their interpretation in terms of a meaningful system - a culture of poverty or a cycle of transmitted deprivation.

Produced in 1929, this Report demonstrates an open desire to purify the quality of the race through the application of eugenic principles in the name of economic efficiency and national welfare. (13) But to specify conditions of existence is not to determine outcomes. The Report examines the implications of attempting to prevent mental defect: "... we must deal not merely with mentally defective persons, but with the whole subnormal group from which the majority of them come" (ibid.). The Committee acknowledge that only those found certifiable could be segregated or sterilised whilst the other "'carriers' of the defect" would continue to breed mental defectives. The prevention of reproduction by fully 10 per cent of the population, through segregation, sterilisation or the regulation of marriage, is written off as "impracticable" (Part III:para.93). Instead, mitigation of the problem is sought: through the lengthier incarceration of the subnormal in Poor

13. "The whole problem of the prevention of primary amentia is one of vital importance and the first nation to arrive at a solution of it will have an appreciable advantage" (Part III:para.95). Coming at the beginning of a decade which would witness the systematic extermination of racial degenerates in a programme of national regeneration in Nazi Germany, such a discourse allows little room for complacency about the purity of national ethics and morality.

Law institutions, mental hospitals and prisons and through more thorough supervision on release; and through "education in the widest sense" on the dubious basis that education raises "the cultural level" by "spreading downwards through the various social groups" and leads to a decrease in the size of families (Part III: para.94,95). 'Education in the widest sense' was to become manifest in programmes such as the Community Development Projects initiated by the Home Office forty years later (Younghusband, 1978: Vol.2:246) and in other 'positive discrimination' projects such as that for Educational Priority Areas, (14) as well as being an integral element in the Kilbrandon Report (1964) in Scotland and the Seeborn Report in England and Wales.

The Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee has not been mentioned to show that social work is really about psychological adjustment to life and has not emerged from the "psychiatric deluge". That Report encapsulates the entire spectrum of concerns which arise from the epistemological matrix of the social sciences and the study of Man and Society: what is pegged-out for us is the space occupied by social work discourse. Social work discourse is not about individuals or groups or communities:

14. "Formulated criteria for success [in CDPs] included increased personal care, better family functioning and child-rearing practices, and improved physical conditions in the neighbourhood" (Younghusband, 1978: Vol.2:246, who also notes: "There was also to be a Home Office central team, with the whole project closely related to the urban aid programme and EPA projects").

"... a 'human science' exists, not wherever man is in question, but wherever there is analysis - within the dimension proper to the unconscious - of norms, rules, and signifying totalities which unveil to consciousness the conditions of its forms and contents" (Foucault, 1970:364).

The Mental Deficiency Committee was instituted to explain the apparently wide geographical variations in numbers of mentally defective children being registered under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913. Were variations due to differential diagnosis? In fact, the Committee had to move beyond a rigid biology and into the realm of the social sciences. The social sciences are not so much concerned to describe the line which divides the normal from the pathological but, rather, the outer-boundaries which set the limits within which humanity may be defined: they trace "... the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences ..." (Foucault, 1977:183). It is this which allows social work discourse to describe a normal distribution and plot ranges of normality upon its curve:

"... everyone ... should accept the mentally handicapped person as an individual in his own right though he may suffer from varying forms and degrees of handicap which affect his capacity to function as a full member of society" (CCETSW, 1979:3. Emphasis added).

Chris Jones maintains that the financing and expansion of social work services by successive governments since 1945 was based upon the belief that social work could solve the linked problems of juvenile delinquency and problem families (1978:36). Full employment and the shortage of labour concentrated attention, in social policy terms, upon

"enhancing the quality of the rising labour force" (ibid.:39).

But as Jones also acknowledges later, an emphasis upon the family is not a new phenomenon, the Charity Organisation Society, for example, tended to deal with family units rather than the individual claimant (ibid.:90). (15) By the 1950s, several government departments were showing concern over 'problem families' (Handler, 1973: 51-3), however, we should not be surprised that a concern for children, in particular, is expressed in a national economy in which distribution is not based upon need. If social policy registers a concern for the rising labour force it is a concern which cuts across crude boundaries between 'good' and 'bad'. Social work discourse represents a knowledge-power relation which imposes homogeneity through normalising judgements.

(ii) The Unification of Social Work Discourse. It should be immediately emphasised that this section will not be concerned with an analysis in terms of the sociology of the professions. Interest will not centre on whether or not social work is 'really' a profession and will not, therefore, seek to enumerate its traits and attributes. (16) The unification of the various sites of social work discourse and its increasing influence upon, and support by, successive governments, have been

15. The COS changed its name to the Family Welfare Association in 1944.

16. Johnson (1972) provides a brief review of sociologies of the professions. Etzioni's The Semi-Professions and Their Organization (1969) is a classical example of the 'trait' approach (teachers, nurses and social workers achieving only semi-professional status) and of the sociological discussion of the 'tensions' said to exist between the concept of profession and that of organisation. See, particularly, Scott in Etzioni (1969) for an application of this approach to social work.

processes which apologists and critics alike describe as the 'professionalisation' of social work. Attention is to be given here to this process of unification and to social work training because they illustrate the consolidation of social work discourse as a science of welfare through a process which identifies the essence of that discourse, its generic central core. 'Professionalisation', then, is not being underestimated but simply being refused ontological privilege. 'Professionalisation' within social work has been a particularly self-conscious process, pursued, ignored or fought over by various agents and its specificity and effectivity should not be overlooked.

It could be said that ever since Abraham Flexner defined the major traits of a profession in 1915 and decided that social work did not qualify because it lacked a technique of its own and merely mediated between those with problems and those with solutions (Becker, 1962:27-8), there has been a marked desire to achieve just such a specific technique and the related appellation of 'profession'. Flexner was not, however, suggesting that social work lacked a body of scientific knowledge but, rather, a "practical communicable technique" derived from the "raw material" of "science and learning" (quoted by Kunitz, 1974:16). In her history of social work education in Britain, Smith suggests that the controversies which occupied the early days of COS training were the same as those concerning contemporary social work educators (1965:7). Basically, these controversies surrounded the distinction between the theory and the principles which underpinned social work and the methods and skills pursued in its practice. The Special Committee on Training of the COS published its first Report in 1898 and expressed its regret

that there was a marked tendency within District Committees to concentrate upon the practical issue of casework to the neglect of "the advocacy of principles". (17) In these early writings we witness the struggle to bridge the same gaps with which present-day social scientists wrestle. Work with the individual client is seen as a practical task which must be given meaning according to wider, more general, social principles. (18)

The year 1901 saw the formation within the COS of the Committee on Social Education and, in 1902, a conference was held to discuss the teaching of social sciences in universities and its relevance for social work education. Again, issues are rehearsed which have seen numerous repeat performances. In his opening paper, Professor Marshall praised the Committee for its proposal to "combine social thought and action", much as the Greeks had done but which the English had largely ignored! (Smith, 1965:37). Corrigan and Leonard (1978:109) note that the Aristotelian notion "of the individual as a social and political animal disappears with the growth of capitalism". What is significant about these references to the ancient Greek conception of politics is the fact that the Greeks saw politics as a continuation of ethics, to be

17. Smith reproduces the Report (1965:79-84) which appeared originally as a COS Occasional Paper.

18. Smith quotes from a paper by Mrs Gardner on the training of volunteers within the COS in which the point is made that training should not concentrate simply upon specific tasks but upon the "whole article" (1965:18). In a paper written six years later (1900) Mrs Bosanquet notes that the training of workers was, first, a matter of learning principles, attitudes and a social philosophy and, secondly, the learning of skills (1965:29). Mrs Bosanquet ends her paper by emphasising that casework individualises the client but that this is only one half of the work to be done: help for the individual must be combined with the aim of "raising the district to which" the case belongs (1965:30).

understood in terms of praxis rather than techne. Political discourse constituted a different order of knowledge from scientific knowledge (Habermas, 1974:41-2). Corrigan and Leonard miss the point when they insist that the "cult of the individual" under 'capitalism' has meant that Man is no longer seen as 'social'. As Habermas shows, what is of more consequence is that political knowledge has been scientised. The Social Education Committee ultimately rejected the view that it should attach its training to the London School of Economics because the courses organised by the latter were lacking in the necessary social and ethical aspects and because the School had "been associated conspicuously with one school of thought" (Smith, 1965: 39-40). What the COS was clearly looking for was a system of what a recent BASW document calls "liberal education" (1979:para.3.2(i); and see Heywood, 1964:10-11). University representatives believed that university education provided just such a service. Marshall felt it provided for the development of imaginative powers (Smith, 1965:36-7); another speaker saw the university as training the student's mind, inculcating the power of judgement ⁽¹⁹⁾ (ibid.:38). The COS, however, viewed university training as being too removed from the actual conditions of life.

In the event, the COS provided its own brand of training for social work, through its School of Sociology, until 1912 when financial problems forced it to amalgamate with the LSE. Thereafter, university

19. The Health of Munition Workers Committee was later to endorse just such a 'liberal education' as ideally suiting welfare work: "breadth of judgement, wide understanding, good sense and all that general combination of qualities which belong to the educated man or woman ..." (1918:para.468).

departments began providing courses in social studies which included some consideration of practical training but the COS and other voluntary organisations also developed practical training courses (Smith, 1965:62). It seems likely, therefore, that the COS wanted the kind of education in the social sciences which the universities could provide but guarded with jealousy the business of creating social workers. A liberal education was a politically neutral education and, in 1925, Macadam was firmly of the belief that such neutrality was more easily fostered in the cloisters of the university than elsewhere. Both the BASW document and Martin Davies agree. Both feel that social work education benefits from the kind of "cross fertilization" to be experienced within a university and which prevents the development of a narrow perspective (BASW, 1979:para.6.7; Davies, 1979:24). But, as Davies also notes, this is not the view of many "practice agencies", that is, those who employ social workers. (20)

At a very early point in this controversy, however, the Greek ideal of praxis was lost. A "liberal education" has become defined as "a broad understanding of society and human personality" (BASW, 1979: para.3.2(i)). The real question has become one of deciding the balance to be achieved between academic education and the education achieved in

20. One Director of Social Services has written: "Some of us are appalled at the quality of training now undertaken ... The CQSW is no more than social work square-bashing ..." (Roycroft, Social Work Service, No.18, December 1978:27, IHSS).

the social work 'university of life' (actual experience). (21)

This disservice to Greek ideals was apparent in 1902 when Marshall described Greek thought and Greek action as being "indissolubly welded together" (Smith, 1965:37). It is in the social scientific casting of Man as at once object and subject, empirical and transcendental, that we find the source of social work's anguished attempts to weld together that which, by prior definition, is not compatible.

Social work discourse has epistemological conditions of existence and it also has legal, cultural, political conditions which influence its form and content. The attempt to describe a discursive regularity must, however, avoid the imputation of an unquestioned coherence, an identifiable and identified social institution. This thesis has explored what Foucault calls the 'surfaces of emergence' of social work discourse in 19th century Poor Law legislation and

21. In writing of the amalgamation of the COS and LSE courses, the COS Annual Report for 1912 noted that that success depended "on its Director [Urwick] having been himself trained in the practical duties of case work ..." (Smith, 1965:57). Liberal education, but on the terms dictated by social work educators, is an understandable reaction from a profession conscious of its own identity and destiny. The issue reappeared in 1977 when a number of 'unqualified' social workers were appointed to directorships of social work/services departments. Not all social workers support what they see as BASW's elitism in aiming for a fully qualified profession and a process of accreditation (see letter in Social Work Today, 19th April 1977: "Hiding behind qualifications"). And clearly not all social workers feel that their Directors ought to be professionally qualified. See, for example, the support given to the unqualified candidate in Grampian Region (Social Work Today, 18th January 1977: "Grampian social workers back deputy director"). BASW, of course, has insisted that Directors should be qualified (Social Work Today, 25th January, 1977:4) and the government has endorsed this view by implementing its powers under the Social Work (Scotland) Act to prescribe the qualifications of Directors (Social Work Today, 28th June 1977). The position in England, which has social services departments is, however, more ambiguous (Social Work Today, 22nd February 1977:3,16; and 24th July 1979). A similar controversy rages over the appointment of non-social workers to chairs of social work (Rees in Community Care, 22nd November 1978).

charitable policing of idleness and its "grids of specification" which correspond to the constituent models of the social sciences (Foucault, 1972:41-2). In the present century, we witness a political and ideological contestation of the question - who is speaking? What is the status of those agents who, as Foucault has it, "... have the right, sanctioned by law or tradition, juridically defined or spontaneously accepted, to proffer such a discourse?" (ibid.: 50).

Despite the contemporary proliferation of self-doubt literature in social work journals, the casual observer cannot fail to be impressed by the contrast between the professional and unified identity of social work today and the confused, incoherent and amateurish image of only some twenty years ago. Figures from 1975 suggest that almost all senior social workers and team leaders are qualified and that at least half of all basic grade social workers hold a qualification. (22) Research published in Social Work Today (Glasser and Walklate, 1979) suggests that social work clients in Liverpool showed a great deal of support for social workers during their strike in 1979 whilst a national opinion poll shows that many members of the public have some notion of who social

22. These are figures for England and Wales (Social Work Today, 12th April 1977). Figures for Scotland show that nearly all local authority social workers hold a CQSW (Social Work Services Group Statistical Bulletin - Staff of Scottish Social Work Departments, 1979). Figures for those employed in residential care usually show a much lower percentage of qualification.

workers are employed by and what they do ⁽²³⁾ (Weir, 1981). In marked contrast, the portraits presented by Rodgers and Dixon (1960) and by Jeffreys (1965) suggest services staffed largely by unqualified but dedicated spinsters. ⁽²⁴⁾ In addition, both studies illustrate the breadth of work which both researchers and respondents were prepared to include within the concepts of social work and social services. ⁽²⁵⁾

The fragmented nature of social work until recent times reflected the diversity of institutional sites created by cultural and legal conditions of existence. Specific bodies of social work discourse depended upon specific conditions of legitimation and described specific sites of application. In general, however, they can be seen to depend upon the Poor Laws and upon charitable endeavour as their 'surfaces of emergence', and upon the incursion of medicine and political economy by the social sciences for their "grids of specification".

23. When asked "Who do they work for?", 27% of respondents said the local authority; 5% the social services; and 3% the welfare department. 48% of respondents described social workers as "caring people in a difficult job"; 41% described them as being "there to help people find their own solutions to practical or emotional problems".

24. One can gain a flavour of the pen-picture supplied by Rodgers and Dixon from the following example (1960:63). Discussing the town's youth employment services, the deputy youth employment officer is described as having no academic qualifications but a long and varied experience of work with young people. "After several years in the cotton mills she spent ten years as games mistress, secretary, and deputy headmistress in various approved schools". And then, in a footnote, "She had attended a leaders' course in physical education and also possessed the Amateur Swimming Association teacher's certificate, a diploma in life saving, and an advanced folk-dancing certificate".

25. And see the list of occupation groups discussed by Younghusband and supplied by local authority health and welfare services (1959:para.320).

"In a system of discipline, the child is more individualized than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and the non-delinquent" (Foucault, 1977:193).

The task of the first hospital almoner supplied in 1895 by the COS was to assess the needs of the numerous persons who crowded into hospital out-patient departments (Cope Report, 1951:para.110-111). Prevention of abuse of public (Poor Law) and private (charitable) hospitals by those who could afford to pay was a task of the almoners until the National Health Service began (Curtis Interim Report, 1946: Appendix; Chambers, 1959:366). But the assessment of patients' needs was social work in a medical setting (Younghusband, 1951:para.221), and the status of the almoner as social worker was enhanced through association with the prestigious medical profession. This association fixed the status of the almoner vis à vis other social workers but also vis à vis the medical profession. As a professor heading a medical team is quoted as saying: "It must never be forgotten that medical social work is quite different from an independent branch like family case work where ... the worker has I presume the right and duty to direct the social treatment. Where social work is an adjunct to medicine, the medical view comes first ..." (Chambers, 1959:371). Nevertheless, within the general field of social work, almoners had the prestige associated with a separate professional association which registered qualified almoners and organised its own training school. The suggestion made by the Cope Committee (1951) that the almoner was one medical auxiliary amongst many and should come under the supervision of a general

Council which would register auxiliaries in the NHS, was opposed in a Minority Report by the almoner on the Committee who argued that the professional responsibility of almoners would be undermined (and see Younghusband, 1978, Vol.I:145-6). In 1953, the Ministry of Health confirmed that almoners would not be classified as medical auxiliaries.

Like the Cope Committee, the Mackintosh Committee was appointed "to consider the supply and demand, training and qualifications" of, in this case "social workers in the mental health services". This category included psychiatric social workers (PSWs) and there was no suggestion of their being considered as medical auxiliaries. Younghusband described PSWs as "the most exclusive category of all social work" (1947:para.407). To the extent that psychiatry was seen as an exclusive medical specialism, PSWs gained additional status over almoners. Since its inception in Britain in 1929, PSW was closely associated with child guidance which again added prestige to the work. The Mackintosh Committee had no hesitation in acknowledging the distinction between PSW and other social work tasks in the mental health field (26) but registered difficulty in circumscribing the tasks of

26. The Committee had been asked to present a separate, interim report on psychiatric social workers which it did in April 1949. In its full Report the Committee recommended that "The term 'psychiatric social worker' should be restricted to persons holding a university mental health certificate. These persons should be regarded as specialists ..." (1951:"Recommendation" 5). In 1959 the Younghusband Report made the same plea for qualified almoners (para.435).

what it called "mental welfare workers" (1951:para.38). (27)

Nevertheless, Mackintosh was prepared to claim "that specialisation has gone too far" and to suggest general courses of training for social work based upon social science courses but with a greater emphasis upon "the actual practice of social work" (1951:para.97).

In fact, no action was taken and, eight years later, Younghusband was to "deplore the time lost" (1959:para.226).

With the provision of school meals in 1906 and a school medical service in 1907, School Care Committees were created to assess parental payment, if any, for such services. In addition, however, they offered a welfare service, acting as go-between for school and home; advising children on choice of employment; providing a general supervision during the early years of employment (Political and Economic Planning, 1937:70). In London, such work was carried out by specialist workers (children's care organisers). The Curtis Interim Report recorded that organisers were carrying out broad welfare duties with children and their families and were expected to hold a Social Science Certificate and have a specific period of practical training (1946:Appendix, para.6). Compulsory education, of course, necessitated the introduction of officers to ensure compliance (school attendance officers). By 1946, Curtis was able to report that a number of education authorities were employing "welfare officers" to carry this

27. The Curtis Interim Report had earlier suggested that mental health workers were to be distinguished from psychiatric social workers because they were, for the most part, only concerned with mental defectives (Appendix, para.14). Mackintosh noted that a number were former relieving officers and carried general social work duties (1951:para.38).

and other statutory duties (28) and in acknowledgement of this welfare role, the professional association changed the name of the profession to that of education welfare officers (Ralphs Report, 1975: para.15). In 1960, Rodgers and Dixon were able to note that the education welfare officers (EWOs) in their study saw themselves as social workers (1960:60). Nevertheless, despite agreement within the Council for Training in Social Work (29) that opportunities should be developed for allowing EWOs to enrol on social work courses, decisions were deferred, first until the Plowden Committee had reported (1967) and then until publication of the Seeborn Report (1968). As Younghusband notes: "With some justification, EWOs felt themselves neglected" (1978: Vol.2:281). Not until the Report of the Ralphs Committee, appointed by the Local Government Training Board, was published in 1975 were the work and training needs of EWOs reviewed. That Report recommended that EWOs should take the CQSW as their professional qualification. The Report also recognised that an aspiring profession has to relieve itself of routine administrative tasks and identify those functions requiring the attention of trained professionals (1975:para.125-136). The Report, in fact, relegated the original duties of the attendance officer (enforcing attendance; preventing employment of children) to the bottom of its list

28. For example, writing reports for juvenile courts; the supervision of children under a 'Fit Person Order' (Interim Report, 1946:Appendix, para.7).

29. Created under the Health Visiting and Social Work (Training) Act, 1962 and based on the recommendations of the Younghusband Report (1959).

of potential functions. Of primary concern was the "assessment of social, emotional and educational problems" (para.130). CCETSW agreed with the Committee's recommendations and Younghusband was able to suggest, in 1978, that: "At long last policy moves had begun to bring EWOs in out of the cold"(Vol.2:284). (30)

What the Curtis Interim Report Appendix describes for us are the various "social workers in child care". Not until the recommendations of that Committee were implemented through the 1948 Children Act was a branch of social work designated with the specific responsibility of dealing with children deprived of a 'normal home background'.

Epistemological and economic conditions of existence of social work discourse do not determine the form through which that discourse is implemented. What we can identify, however, is the increasing scientisation of social work discourse and the consolidation of that discourse around certain central concepts and through the active intervention of the state and social work agents. Thus, moral welfare work, which had its 'surface of emergence' within voluntary religious organisations, was already searching, in 1919, for "a more scientific basis" for its work and turned to psychology to provide it (Chambers, 1959:362-3). (31) Some of the work done by moral welfare workers was

30. Nevertheless, in 1980, Milner was of the opinion that social workers remained disinclined to accept the EWO as a 'true' social worker. Milner argues that the day to day work of the EWO is clearly social work and that the main point of conflict is over the importance placed upon regular school attendance by EWOs. Social work holism dictates that, in some instances, school attendance should take a secondary place to other considerations (1980:21). The important point to note, however, is that the furtherance of the professional ambitions of EWOs resides in adopting social scientific knowledge: its application in practice defines EWOs as social workers.

31. From 1920, training was provided in Josephine Butler Memorial House in Liverpool.

transferred to the Probation Service after the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933 and, as Chambers suggests, other duties were taken over by other professional groups (e.g. health visitors) as unmarried mothers became less dependent upon charitable assistance (ibid.:363). As Younghusband maintains, problems of illegitimacy and the unmarried mother were, perhaps, inappropriately distinguished from wider social work concerns with families (1959:para.425). The social scientific 'grid of specification' of social work discourse, particularly in terms of that constituent model which allows the interpretation of norms and rules to be cast in terms of systemic meaning, directs the attention of those within the profession and the state who would seek to 'improve', 'rationalise' or 'professionalise' that discourse towards unifying concepts such as 'the problem family' and generic social work.

During the 1940s and 1950s we witness the active efforts of specific occupational groups and state enquiries to measure the relationship of those groups to a recognised social work discourse as the science of welfare. In 1943, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust published a report of its experimental funding of courses in youth leadership. The report emphasises the Bursary Committee's task of choosing candidates with "the right innate qualities for leadership" and provides a profile of the "born club leader": "a whole person", happy both with groups and individuals and able to work with dedicated but professional detachment (1943:11). Only two training courses were actually available. The YWCA course required the student to spend three months in a COS office and three months in the YWCA college

studying, inter alia, social administration; psychology; social hygiene; history; public speaking; and relations with government departments (ibid.:18). (32) Possession of a Social Science Diploma or a teaching qualification brought exemption from certain aspects of the college work. The other course, organised by the National Association of Girls' Clubs, covered two years and required attendance on a Social Science Certificate course: "this certificate is a requirement in most other forms of professional social work and the segregation of club leaders was felt to be undesirable" (ibid.:19). Part-time work in a social casework agency was also required in order to gain experience in helping "those in distress for economic reasons or because of some personal problem of maladjustment" (ibid.).

By 1960, the youth service had not developed greatly and the Albermarle Report was highly critical of government failure in this field (Younghusband, 1978, Vol.2:262 et seq.), recommending a ten-year development plan. For our purposes, the point to note is that a National College for the Training of Youth Leaders was created in 1961 and remained in operation until 1970. Younghusband describes for us the curriculum: "... principles and practice of the youth service ...; social studies; social group work; and social psychology (including human growth and development) ..." (ibid.:271). In its review of the

32. This was an emergency 12 month course. The usual training lasted two years and, presumably, COS observation and college education would have occupied 6 months each. The remainder of the course was spent in practical training in clubs, thus conforming to the social work tradition that half of the available training time must be spent on-the-job.

training given to youth workers, the Consultative Group on Youth and Community Work Training records:

"... there seems little doubt that full-time youth workers have been encouraged to model themselves on social work professionals as well as the educationists with whom they were formally allied in the 1944 Education Act ..." (1978:30-1).

(33)

One year after publication of the Carnegie report on training for the youth service, the Ministry of Education produced a report on community centres (1944) in which it discussed the qualifications required of potential wardens of the new centres. A "liberal education" is recommended (para.59) and strong emphasis is placed upon "the right type of person" rather than upon "any specific academic qualifications" (para.56). Nevertheless, training was seen to be necessarily based "on the study of social science, if possible up to university diploma standard ...". In addition, "training in practical psychology" was recommended as well as a period of apprenticeship in a community centre (para.58). Maturity was emphasised and some support given to the notion that suitable people from other occupations might be encouraged to change employment and become wardens though, strangely perhaps, youth leaders were not considered to be necessarily suitable candidates (para.61). One might speculate that the community centre warden appeared to be at the edges

33. As Younghusband notes, in the late 60s greater interest in community work led to an increase in tension over the youth service's dual association with education and social work. It is worth noting that some educational establishments offer courses in youth and community work (Moray House's School of Community Studies, for example).

of social work discourse in the 1940s, given the role of promoting the "social and physical training and recreation of the community" ("Prefatory Note") which was envisaged by the Ministry of Education. But association with the education services and, perhaps, the emphasis upon the role being a second career suitable for later years of employment, has militated against such an institutional site as an appropriate location for social work discourse.

In contrast, the site of the approved school, so named by the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, provided a tradition through its rehabilitative work as the former industrial schools and reformatories for children and through its association with one of those illustrious figures of 19th century social reform, Mary Carpenter (Young and Ashton, 1956:165 et seq.), which would suggest it as appropriate for the gestation of social work discourse. Nevertheless, the Home Office report of the Committee on Approved Schools and Remand Homes (1946) felt that, self-evident though "specialised training" might be, it had not been carried out in any systematic way, most serving officers bringing experience rather than professional training to the work. Training for officers in approved schools was felt to be necessary to forestall wasteful periods spent in 'learning from experience' and to separate the suitable from the unsuitable. The special training advocated would, for housemasters, follow on from a social science certificate or diploma course and would include, inter alia, study of social and economic conditions and the social services; child development; elementary psychology and the causes of delinquency; intelligence testing; and club work and youth organisations. There

was, of course, to be practical work, including visits to approved schools and remand homes.

Undoubtedly, the approved school ⁽³⁴⁾ is one specific location within the matrix of sites that play a recognised role in the utilization and formation of welfare discourse. Social work discourse has a place within that site, although its acceptance and effectivity has not gone unchallenged. If social work discourse has struggled for recognition within the realm of education, a similar struggle has been evident within the criminal justice system. ⁽³⁵⁾

These three strategic sites (the youth club; the community centre; the approved school) have simply been referred to by way of illustration of the use made by state bodies and other agencies of the social sciences as the appropriate medium for sifting, training and allocating workers within the welfare network of institutions. The 1940s were, of course, a time of reappraisal as self-conscious efforts were being made to create a 'welfare' state out of the conglomeration of public and private institutions offering welfare services. As we have already seen, the 1950s also witnessed a series of enquiries which located a number of occupational groups in terms of their relationship

34. Now known as community homes in England and Wales and List D schools in Scotland.

35. Many community homes and List D schools remain under the management of charitable and religious organisations and it is likely that headmasters are selected for what are seen as wider qualities than simply knowledge of social work principles. Interestingly, Hoghugh, Principal of Aycliffe School, has provided a caustic critique of social work theory and practice which is, effectively, an endorsement of the scientific and eclectic epistemological basis of social work discourse generally (Hoghugh, 1980). Hoghugh is, however, exceptional in his excursions into social work discourse.

to social work discourse. Younghusband notes, for example, that the 1950s "... was the period when the claim of health visitors, and of others on their behalf, to be ... 'general purpose social workers' was at its height" (36) (1978, Vol.1:205). In contrast, in 1956, the Piercy Committee (37) declared that it was not convinced that disablement resettlement officers should be recruited from the ranks of trained social workers, the "social element" to the work being appropriate, rather, for separate referral to a social worker where necessary (para.186). Work in residential care is currently portrayed in social work journals as the poor cousin of 'real' social work. In its Interim Report of March 1946, the Curtis Committee discussed the training of House Mothers for Children's Homes and recommended the creation of a Central Council for Training in Child Care and a programme of training for a Certificate in Child Care. Practical training was, of course, advocated but the "theoretical work" was noticeably pragmatic: household management; prevention of disease; record keeping; with, additionally, some 'liberal education' -- ("Some courses devoted to improving the general standard of culture ..." of the student) and some "non-technical instruction" in child development (1946:para.14). The Williams Committee, set up by the National Council of Social Service in 1962 with advisors from various government departments, recommended in 1967 that a two year training course be

36. And see the discussions in Rodgers and Dixon (1960:39); Jeffreys (1965:64-89); and Chambers (1959:372).

37. Committee on the Rehabilitation, Training and Resettlement of Disabled Persons.

created in residential care and again, emphasis was placed upon subjects being taught in a "practical way", with students not requiring "specific academic qualifications" (1967:209). (38)

The Williams Committee attempted to define a generic course of training for residential workers built around the belief that all clients in care "... need understanding and help for themselves as individuals. It is the sustaining of personality with which the worker is concerned ..." (1967:165). Earlier, of course, the Younghusband Report (1959) had written of the need "to appreciate what is common in a variety of human situations ..." (para.554). The unification of social work discourse, for which Younghusband in particular struggled from the end of the Second World War (Younghusband, 1978, Vol.2:Chapter 1), had to surmount the kinds of fragmentation at the institutional and professional level which has been illustrated in this section. It is clear that the state, in particular successive governments and a variety of government departments, has played an important part in the identification of the 'central core' of social work discourse. University social studies

38. In 1959 the Younghusband Report made the minimalist claim: "It is clear to us that in certain respects residential work ... contains a social work element" (para.492). The 'professional' status of residential care has, however, remained confused, the promotion by CCETSW of the Certificate in Social Service, in the mid-1970s, merely bringing this to a head once more. CCETSW have described this training, carried out on a day release or sandwich course basis, as not being a social work qualification (Manning, 1978:21). The Residential Care Association, in its turn, has insisted that the CQSW is the appropriate qualification for its members (see letter in Social Work Today, 15th February, 1977) and the CSS has been described as having a "cut-price image" (Pryce, 1977:7). The Williams Report supplied an outline course which it recommended ("Appendix C") and which differs little, in general terms, from social work courses, though lacking their intensity.

departments in Britain have, since their inception, accepted the role of social science as the theoretical basis of a practice called, earlier in the century particularly, social administration. (39) The Younghusband Report (1959) undoubtedly made a major contribution to the unification of social work discourse through its recommendation of a generic training system, on a national basis, for what it termed "general purpose social workers". Younghusband has described the distinction made by the Committee between professional and general purpose social work as "unfortunate" (1978, Vol.1:222) but, as the Committee recognised, such a proposal was more readily acceptable to existing specialisms (e.g. psychiatric social work). (40) The Council for Training in Social Work, recommended by the Report, although primarily concerned with the health and welfare services, immediately acknowledged its aim of training "social workers whose knowledge and skills enable them to work in a variety of ways with individuals and groups within the community" (quoted by Younghusband, 1978, Vol.1:224).

39. "Nearly all students choose and are selected for these [social studies] courses because they wish ultimately to take up some kind of social work. Thus the courses ... [have] a vocational bias ..." (Joint University Council publication, 1952, quoted by Younghusband, 1978, Vol.2:27). Even in 1973, Webb was able to write that despite the antipathy of sociology department staff towards social work, it was "... the single most important occupation entered by sociology graduates" (1973:600).

40. The first generic course in applied social studies which began in 1954 at the LSE under funding from the Carnegie Trust, was a one year post-graduate course. Students were accepted for fieldwork placements by family casework organisations, the Probation Service and in the medical social work field but not in the psychiatric social work specialism. Specht and Vickery have written that "A great deal of the history of social work in the United Kingdom between the end of the Second World War and 1970 relates to the struggle between the expansion of specialised fields of practice on the one hand and the drive towards genericism in training on the other" (1977:38).

The CTSW provided the national framework for its successor - CCETSW, and the generic courses provided in colleges of further education under CTSW guidance formed the basis for the rapid expansion of demand for trained social workers following implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968 and the Local Authority Social Services Act, 1970.

(iii) Crisis or Presenting Problem? In 1966, Social Work and the Community proclaimed that homogeneity would be brought to the wide ranging responsibilities of the new departments, which had a duty to provide community care and support, by having their basis in "the insights and skills of the profession of social work" (para.10). The Social Work (Scotland) Act subsequently gave to Local Authorities the general duty of promoting social welfare. In England and Wales a similar general duty was not entrusted to Local Authorities but, nevertheless, the Seebohm Report was largely welcomed as an endorsement of the social worth of social work. A decade later, however, witnessed the apparent crisis of confidence which was discussed briefly in the introduction to this chapter.

Contributors to a Fabian Society conference in 1969 on the Seebohm Report had, perhaps, already laid the basis for an explanation of this 'crisis'. In general, it was felt that the Report ignored essential discussion about planning and objectives (Townsend, 1970:7), reorganisation was an exercise in the name of managerialism rather than welfare (Parry et al., 1979:163). In his contribution to the Fabian conference, Sinfield enumerated the areas of concern in relation to social work. Unification would bring increased professionalisation which could isolate social workers from client and community; faith in the efficacy of

social work was not supported by necessary research evidence; definitions of the social work task tended to rely upon social workers' definitions to the exclusion of clients and the wider public; lack of resources would cause frustration amongst social workers; trained social workers would have to be used effectively (Sinfield, 1970:23-45). The 'accuracy' of these 'forecasts' is apparent.

As is so often the case, North American experience provided a number of commentators with a view of how social work might develop in Britain. In a paper published in 1955, David Donnison outlined what, for many (although apparently not for Donnison), were the shortcomings of the general basis of social work training to be obtained in university social studies departments in Britain in contrast to training available in North America. Many of the differences, Donnison notes, could be summed up by saying that the Canadian School of Social Work studied offered "professional training" whereas the British university department offered an academic foundation for subsequent professional training (1955:342). More specifically, American students learned "to become social workers rather than to study social work" (ibid.), and were equipped to enter a wide range of agencies. In Britain, on the other hand, the student had, generally, to commit herself to one specialism, either through professional qualification, or by on the job training. Whilst the British student studied academic psychology the American student experienced a professional socialisation and a self-understanding (ibid.:344). "The kind of fundamental skepticism encouraged in other university departments", writes Donnison,

"may even prove a handicap in courses in which students are required to become something rather than to study something" (ibid.). A quarter of a century later, Martin Davies, in his inaugural lecture, has implied that the teaching of sociology to social work students is, perhaps, less than helpful in producing the kinds of workers required. The tendency to see training "as an extension of liberal education" has often resulted in an exacerbation of the rift between theory and practice, the university and the fieldwork placement (1981:19). In part, Davies' position is understandably pragmatic: students apply for courses in the belief that social work is "viable"; employers second staff and have "a right to anticipate the end product" (ibid.). But Davies was also saying something about the nature of social work: agencies and clients expect newly qualified workers "to have achieved a minimum degree of efficiency, competence and self confidence". Hence, "Social work curricula must become much more practice-based than hitherto" (ibid.). For Davies, the problem with social work is that it fails to marry theory with practice, to the detriment of the latter. In part, Davies' solution is to be found in the masters degree course offered by his own department: in effect, Davies demands greater control by the profession over social work discourse. (41)

Similar assessments of 'the problem' are made by other social work

41. Davies writes: "The social worker ... has to learn to live with [imperfection] ...; his skills are designed to take it into account and still to do his best for both agency and client ... Hence the need for the profession to have control both over the development of practice and the future shape of training" (1981:19).

educators. For Coull and Hall (1981) the major problem for all vocational training "is the splitting of theory and practice". It is the structure and values of higher education which are in "fundamental contradiction" to the acquisition of practice skills (1981:12). In the educational establishment, knowledge reflects tutors' interests: knowledge should be determined "by the needs of practice" (ibid.:13). Parsloe has suggested that "the way social work education is organised may unfit students for employment" (1977:15). One solution to bridge the gap between education and practice, Parsloe suggests, would be to insist that all social work teachers be involved in social work practice (ibid.:16). In her inaugural lecture, two years later, Parsloe emphasised the same issue. (42)

Concern about the relationship between theory and practice, the training institution and the practice agency are reflected in other facets of the social work 'crisis'. Five years after CCETSW took responsibility for probation officer training, Hugh Barr was writing about anxiety within the Probation Service over the feeling that it had lost control of training; that generic training meant loss of probation as a specialism; and that the newly qualified were ill prepared for probation practice (Barr, 1976). (43) Elsewhere in the professional journals we can read about: the need for social workers to be accountable to

42. "Bridging the gap between training and practice", (Social Work Today report on the lecture, March 27th, 1979:6). And see "Joint appointment helps to close the credibility gap" by Bob Stevens (Social Work Today, January 24th, 1978:7-8).

43. Bruce Lynch makes a similar point about the role of Scottish social workers in supervising offenders ("Does supervision work?", Community Care, May 28th, 1981:18-19).

themselves but also to their employers and their profession more generally; the tensions of working as a professional within a local authority bureaucratic structure; the conflict and lack of communication between social workers in area teams and their management superiors.

Donnison, in 1955, was noting that research into social work practice was a "neglected field" and recommending post-graduate social work programmes. "More postgraduate work might", felt Donnison, "also strengthen one of the weakest links in the British education chain - that between the universities and the field" (1955:348). However, Donnison was endorsing the tradition of a 'liberal education' in social work rather than suggesting a means of consolidating the essential nature of social work knowledge.

"If social workers are to give leadership in the development of social services they must be more than experts in human relations skills. They must be aware of the impact of their work on the client and his family, but aware also of its social, political, and economic implications. Perhaps they should recognize, too, that the job of helping people will always demand a critical approach to accepted methods and assumptions, and a willingness to hold heretical and unpopular views" (1955:350).

Nevertheless, Donnison's early paper can be read as a celebration of the kind of professional training available in North America, the main difference being that American students had already had their 'liberal education' as undergraduates. By 1964, Heywood was recording her view that a 'liberal education' in social studies was a facet of social work training but that the "professional" part of training concerned specific

teaching about the dynamics of human behaviour and of helping people under stress (1964:10-11). By 1975, CCETSW was arguing that social work students should acquire "skills and knowledge". It was argued that professional practice was the appropriate use of skills on the basis of knowledge. The document expressed the view, however, that the acquisition of knowledge had been more highly valued than the acquisition of skills (1975:para.5.2). (44) In an earlier paragraph the CCETSW document identifies the "knowledge and skills for basic practice" (para.4.5) and they reflect the location of social work discourse within the matrix of the social sciences: knowledge of human development and behaviour, of society and its institutions and the way they interact (the "ontological gulf"). Basic skills were confined to: the ability to apply this knowledge and the ability to "use oneself in serving individuals and groups, communities and society". The dilemma reappears: social work finds itself treating as its object what is in fact a condition of its possibility. The ability to apply social work knowledge depends upon knowledge of Man and Society: the ability to "use oneself" depends upon knowledge of oneself as a functioning organism within a system of norms and located within a social structure of conflict and rules. The ability to apply social work knowledge depends upon social work knowledge. Despite an obvious recognition that Man's

44. The CCETSW working group on Education and Training for Social Work note that this is a reflection of a general emphasis in higher education rather than simply the conviction of social work teachers (1975).

historicity both constitutes and transcends him, (45) social work writers are constrained to find technical solutions to their dilemma. This can be seen in the attempt to define the essence, the central core, of social work and in the emphasis upon the selection of students with 'appropriate' qualities. (46)

45. "... social work's boundaries are not readily identified and may be constantly changing" (CCETSW, 1975:para.4.8); "... in any responsive profession, methods and approaches will need to adapt to changes in society" (BASW, Social Work Education : The Way Ahead, 1979: para.3.2).

46. The CCETSW document attributes its failure to identify social work's common 'core', in effect, to the lack of a core to the social sciences (1975:para.4.7). Others, however, continue the search. Davies, for example, apologises to readers of his series of "Community Care Practice Handbooks" because a hoped for volume - Basic Skills in Social Work - had "proved too elusive to pin down at the moment" (Community Care, 1st November, 1979:25). Candidates for social work training require exceptional abilities: "A commitment to the enhancement of human well being; to the maintenance of personal integrity and the development of professional skills; maturity, respect for individuals, ability to work without bias, capacity to cope with a range of feelings, ability to work on one's own and as a member of a team, reliability and imagination" (BASW, 1979:para.6.23). These are merely the "personal qualities" required, the list of "intellectual qualities" is longer. As those who select are social workers, they already possess these qualities and have the skill to spot them in others. One university course was more explicit about this process of 'social working' the social workers: "The main objective is to form an opinion about the ego strengths of the applicant ..." (Michael, 1976: 685).

Social workers search for certainty. (47) And yet the logic of social work's normalising judgements, seeks not to define the good and the bad, the normal and the abnormal but, rather, the more or less good and the more or less normal. Consequently, social work ideals of being non-judgemental, of having respect for the person, spill over into social workers' views about their colleagues and neophytes. And here we find another source of tension. The epistemological conditions of existence of social work discourse imply that whatever the social sciences produce by way of theory and method can find a place within social work discourse. Social work crises of identity are the presenting problems which reflect the tensions drawn from these conditions of existence. Thus, acceptance of 'society's' deviants is often at odds with social work's responsibility to that 'society'. When a deviant group such as the self-styled radical social workers attack the profession from within, tolerance is stretched to its limits.

47. Social workers have to have exceptional abilities to be able to cope with the exceptional skills they are expected to acquire: "... skills in small group functioning and influencing small groups ... research, understanding and preparing reports ... public speaking ... lobbying ... understanding how the system works and how to influence it ... determining priorities ... judgement" (Marshall, Social Work In Action, 1979:54); "Discriminating use of material and social resources, work with volunteers and collaboration with colleagues of the same and different disciplines ..." (BASW, 1979:para.6.30); in addition, "There is a need on qualifying courses for some teaching in management and organizational skills ..." (ibid.:para.6.32); and the ultimate analogue, "... the skilled surgeon is able to deal with emergencies during an operation and the skilled social worker is able to deal with changes in information and behaviour during a period of contact with a client ..." (CCETSW, 1979:9). Little wonder that Wootton felt talk of skills in social work involved "... claims to powers which verge upon omniscience and omnipotence" (1959:271).

3. Radical Social Work or Radical Social Workers (48)

"Many generic social work courses consist of little more than systematic indoctrination of students in sectarian political ideas. Curiously enough, this is done in the name of encouraging students to develop flexible minds. In fact, however, students are being trained, not to support the society that pays their bills, but to be its gravediggers" (Senior Probation Officer, quoted in Gould, 1977:22).

A contribution from the Probation Service to the moral panic over supposed infiltration of higher education by political extremists of the left (49) is not, perhaps, very surprising. The advent of radicalism within social work broadly has, however, caused some bitter reactions. Butrym has dismissed it as reflecting "... a preference for slogans over concern with issues of substance" (1976:127). Pinker has argued that the "politicisation of any professional activity is an abuse of trust". Social workers should not become involved in

48. This sub-title is based on a paper by Bankowski, Mungham and Young - "Radical criminology or radical criminologist?" (1977). The proliferation of texts on 'radical', 'new', 'Marxist' and 'socialist' criminology has been paralleled on the social work side and for much the same reasons. Criminology has traditionally been an applied social science in the realm of crime and punishment and its genealogy runs parallel to, and intersects with, that of social work, constituting as they do, facets of a wider welfare discourse.

49. The Attack on Higher Education appeared in September 1977 and was produced by Julius Gould for the Institute for the Study of Conflict. Concerned to reveal the influence of "certain Marxist approaches" on higher education, the report contains sections on social work education. Steven Lukes does not have to work hard to show that the report fails according to its own standards of scientific objectivity but in describing the thrust of the report as "a grand conspiracy theory, invulnerable to evidence and poorly argued ..." (1977:13) it has to be acknowledged as no better or worse than many of the Marxist theories it attacks.

explicitly political activities at the local level, a task, according to Pinker, appropriate only for community workers (1979b:595). Much the same argument is made by Halmos in his plea for the "personal" over the "political" in social work (1978). A CCETSW document discussing Values in Social Work suggests that those committed to revolution must ask themselves whether they are "using" their clients (1976:43). Letters to social work journals complain about the "dogmatic monologue"; "Marxist Stew" and "Token Radicalism" and readers are informed that a Secretary of State for Social Services has warned social workers about the dangers of becoming involved in local politics (Community Care, February 19th, 1981). The Daily Telegraph has carried headlines about Marxist infiltration of the Probation Service (October 6th, 1976) and NAPOs president, Lord Hunt, has declared that probation officers cannot pursue both professional and political objectives (Social Work Today, May 31st, 1977). Finally, certain local authorities have reacted against welfare radicals: Bradford's, for example, by considering the introduction of a code of conduct restricting employees' rights to join pressure groups and Birmingham's by producing a blacklist of social work training courses (Social Work Today, September 5th, 1978; and November 14th, 1978).

The dilemma for liberal commentators is that social work discourse has always found room for what is often euphemistically called 'social action'. In recent years the social work establishment has seen advocacy on behalf of clients as a legitimate function within the social work or social service department. Such functions have usually appeared in broad definitions, in words which speak in hushed tones: "to bring

about any necessary improvements in the environment" (Younghusband Report, 1959:para.616). But even when the issue is supposedly being openly tackled, one can detect a reluctance to handle certain concepts. The CCETSW document - Education and Training for Social Work - speaks, historically, of "the neglect of society and the environment" but then conducts the discussion in terms of 'environment' without examining what radical commentators would call 'structural aspects of society' (1975:paras.2.14 - 2.15). A BASW report on Social Action and Social Work illustrates even more clearly the dilemmas experienced when certain premises such as 'social work is about social change' become widely accepted within the profession and are then pursued to their 'logical' conclusion. (50) But such a discourse also suggests that radicalism can be contained within the recognised parameters of social work theory and practice. (51) For the radical social worker, the current 'crisis' in social work is a reflection of the wider 'crisis of capitalism': for the liberal social worker, the 'crisis' is simply a surface manifestation of functional problems which can be corrected 'therapeutically' through selection procedures for students; improved teaching; refinement of methods; and so on. And yet, there is a constant tension in most

50. For example, the document advises: "Before going beyond the brokerage role in any sort of social action social workers and social work agencies must work out an escalating series of strategies so that if the gentlest and most traditional strategies are unsuccessful, a 'harder' or more public approach can be threatened (1974:para.2.2.3. Emphasis added).

51. The "Introduction" to the document records that Janie Thomas addressed a BASW Council meeting "on the part the Association could play in social and political action. The Council decided to set up a working party on social action ..." 'Political action', then, disappears and social action becomes another method to add to the existing repertoire.

radical social work discussions which must acknowledge that the socialist revolution is far from imminent (although it is invariably immanent) and, consequently, client problems can only be treated as surface manifestations (inequality; false consciousness) of 'capitalism'.

(i) The Radical Paradigm. The theoretical basis of the radical critique of the Welfare State was discussed in Chapter 2 and it is clearly the basis adopted by most radical social workers on which to build their practice. (52) There are, of course, areas of disagreement. Some radicals have adopted a stance which allows little or no room for manoeuvre within the existing conditions of existence of social work discourse. Simpkin calls this the libertarian position and distinguishes it from his own Marxist revolutionary view (1979:21). The libertarian stance coincides with what Bankowski et al call radical phenomenology within the sociology of deviance (1977:39) and it clearly derives influence from the New Left movement of the 1960s and the attempts by Marxists such as Marcuse to find revolutionary potential within fringe groups, including the 'residuum'. The 'dangerous classes' are to be aroused by the radical vanguard: "... nuts, sluts and perverts not only have ethical authenticity but a possibly transcendent political authenticity as well" (Bankowski et al., 1977:39). Libertarian social workers reject authority, concentrating their efforts on enhancing the authenticity of the social deviant through self-help groups and community

52. Corrigan and Leonard (1978) remains the major statement of the Marxist framework supporting radical social work and radical welfare broadly. Simpkin's (1979) position seems to be broadly the same as does that adopted by Brake and Bailey (1980).

action and through concentration upon the encouragement of alternative life-styles (Simpkin, 1979:21-2). Emphasising the standard social work ideals of respect for the individual and being non-judgemental, the libertarian rejects all aspects of social work which embody 'social control'. As a consequence, the libertarian tends to induce a new cult of the individual in which 'anything goes'. Now although writers such as Simpkin maintain that they are concerned to change the structure of society by working through the class struggle, their attempts to unite theory and practice reflect, on a number of occasions, a marked dependence upon rather basic sociological theories and a failure to move beyond traditional social work principles. This can be seen, for example, in radical social work's own brand of individualism.

Corrigan and Leonard have written about "... a problem which social workers on the left experience in relation to their practice" (1978:107), that is, the conflict between a structural analysis and an understanding of individuals and their experiences. But, as has been suggested, this is a perennial issue in social work in general. For the traditional social work theorist, solutions are sought through fieldwork practice during training; the use of video equipment to monitor practice skills; and through an ethnographic knowledge of how the 'other half' lives. Corrigan's and Leonard's solution to the problem is to postulate a 'Marxist psychology', a materialist interpretation of individual consciousness in which "What is human is a social product and a result of the interaction between man and the social world" (1978:119). But this is surely a most uncontroversial

view which would probably be endorsed by most social scientists, including behaviourist psychologists. To it, Corrigan and Leonard merely add an historicist view that the form of the individual is historically specific. In place of 'bourgeois' psychology's search for a "basic human personality", these authors wish to talk about the "potentialities" of the individual and a form of consciousness which is not ideologically "limited" by 'capitalism'. Social work practice becomes the act of inducing in 'working class' clients a consciousness of their "experience as a class experience" (1978:118-123). Social work education, then, becomes the art of developing "An understanding of the processes involved in ... collective work and the development of skills in order to further it ..." (Leonard, 1979:23). The "key task of radical practice", argues Leonard in his endorsement of the technique of "conscientization", is "an educational one" (1975:57) but to this brand of individualism must be added the radical's belief that contemporary social workers have been de-skilled and, therefore, 'proletarianised' (Leonard, 1978:47). What seems to emerge then, is that social workers are people with particular skills but what really matters is the consciousness of the social worker. Thus, Simpkin writes that "... an active proletarian consciousness seems vital for the development of alternative therapy. We do not need less therapeutic skills but its very different expression" (1979:143). A "proletarian consciousness" is obtainable through the experience of being exploited (for the social worker, this is the consequence of Seeborn bureaucratic welfare structures) and through active participation in the labour movement (usually trades councils and

trade unions - Simpkin, 1979:143; Corrigan and Leonard, 1978:46-7, passim; Brake and Bailey, 1980:19-20, 210-14).

It appears, then, that for some radical social workers, critique is best levelled at traditional social workers rather than traditional social work. For Simpkin, as for many others, social work, taken "to its logical conclusion ... is an inherently radicalising activity ..." (1979:3). "After all, which other workers have first-hand knowledge of the consequences of the workings of our economic system for an increasing proportion of the population?" ask Brake and Bailey (1980: 10). (53) The kinds of examples of 'radical practice' provided in Simpkin's book show the reader the radical social worker but not the radical social work. Simpkin remains free to use, with his authority as a senior social worker in a psychiatric hospital, a traditional social work language of the human psyche. In one case, Simpkin reports, he was "able to build up a discussion on the family and how its imperfections were not necessarily the fault of the parents ..." (1979: 10. Emphasis added). Later, he talks of "weaknesses of personality" but tells his reader "they are not essentially of the individual" but are, rather, determined by class (ibid.:51). In a further, tragic, example Simpkin provides the reader with the "traditional social work view" which would trace the problems to the client's weaknesses of personality and then the radical approach which begins with the "social demands and expectations" which formed and reinforced these weaknesses (ibid.:55). But the contrast is spurious. The traditional

53. One might suggest that the police have, particularly in their new role of community involvement. Seeing the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' is not, per se, a necessarily radicalising experience.

interpretation might well have acknowledged the social demands and expectations but would have been concerned to understand why this individual showed 'weaknesses' whilst others, similarly placed, apparently did not. Therapy might well have been directed towards making the client aware of his weaknesses and their social causes. Simpkin's task seems to have been "to lift ... the burden of guilt and inadequacy for the individuals concerned ..." and then to help them "understand how blame and responsibility must really be distributed" (ibid.). Both approaches, then, take problems as merely 'presenting problems' and then seek to unearth the real problems, located in the grey areas of life, the Other world of the unconscious (mind) or the pre-conscious (history). (54)

Traditional social work discourse is decidedly not being supported but what is being suggested is that, in many instances, the radical alternative offers little that is new. (55) Nor is the 'reality' of mental illness being denied. What is being questioned is the degree to which radical social work discourse frees itself from the epistemological conditions of formation of social work discourse in general. Simpkin's radicalism is based simply on the view that "the capitalist principle that human nature will not alter" must be replaced by the view that consciousness is socially determined (1979:38-9).

54. At another point, Simpkin provides the reader with a picture of Brian, socialised into brutality by the army, who had a "death wish" (1979:57-8).

55. Statham writes that "... consciousness raising attempts to awaken people's awareness in order that they can critically reflect on their experience ... This can be compared with social work's aim of enhancing a person's, a group's, or a community's capacity to look at their own situation ..." (1978:15). In either case, the implication is that there is an objective situation which is only partially comprehended, the consciousness raiser educates and dymystifies through the power of his all-seeing wisdom.

There is, then, for Simpkin a 'human nature', a potentiality, and he, as exponent of the science of welfare, must assist in its ultimate realisation. Bankowski et al have noted of the radical criminology of Taylor, Walton and Young: "... the theoretical implications of their conception of radical criminology are restricted to a reification of personal moral outrage at the manifest inequalities of capitalist societies. Their work is capable only of producing a radical criminologist not a radical criminology" (1977:38). Much the same could be said of radical discourse in the social work realm.

Social working the social workers is an inevitability so long as social work discourse treats as its object of analysis that which also constitutes a condition of its existence. Consciousness raising as a social work method is, then, inevitably directed inward. In discussing the development of a social work area team, for example, Bennett writes: "'Consciousness raising' (a term borrowed in our case from the women's movement) became part of the team's ethos and with it came a corresponding growth in personal confidence and awareness" (1980: 164). Headlines about social work students being indoctrinated into Marxism are, at the very least, insulting to the students concerned. But it is an argument which has also been used by radical writers to describe the professional socialisation of those on social work courses. Given an acceptance that social work as a profession embodies 'special features' beyond the mere functioning of an occupation within a technical division of labour, those involved in the business of enforcing and reinforcing that special quality will accept the notion of being socialised into a profession. For example, the BASW document on Social

Work Education emphasises the place of the practice teacher "in providing the student with a model of social work and a pattern for his future experience" (1979:para.6.36). Essential features for a practice teacher are a social work qualification and two years post qualification experience, along with "a high sense of commitment to social work" (ibid.). One university social work course records in its notes for the assessment of fieldwork, and under a section entitled "Development as a Social Worker", that at the end of the student's first placement the tutor should look for a "growing sense of identification as a professional social worker" (Michael, 1976:703). By the end of the course, however, there should be: "Identity with social work and acceptance that the responsibilities of being a professional person include the capacity to question traditional policies and practices" (ibid.:706). The demand for self-regulation, which is a conscious feature of those occupational groups striving for recognition as a profession, has the obvious consequence, so rightly highlighted by radical critics, of sheltering the group from wider public scrutiny. The reaction of BASW to claims by the Ombudsman that social services staff were too defensive provides an illustration of what is involved. Clearly, BASW would want to draw a distinction between professional and administrative decisions and demand self-regulation over the former. This is reflected in expressions of concern that a layman should be involved in the investigation of complaints against social services. Commission staff "are not always as knowledgeable about social work as we like", BASW's general secretary

is reported to have complained (Community Care, July 12th 1979:3). (56)

Such attempts to define social work as a technical and professional enterprise, only fully to be comprehended by trained social workers, is also reflected in the issues of selecting suitable candidates for training and assessing their performance during the course. (57)

Heywood, for example, sees selection as the assessment of "ability to be trained"; an ability depending in part on "certain standards of behaviour and ideals having been laid down ... in early life ..." (1964:9).

From the radical perspective, Pearson's work has contributed to the 'special qualities' portrayal of social work and to the view that the essentially critical aspect of social work is socialised out of existence during training and practice. Pearson has argued that "the social worker [is] ... essentially a political deviant" (1973:209).

Those entering training are altruistic: they define "the business of daily life as boring, meaningless, and antisocial: in a word, 'alienated'" (ibid.:217). Pearson's main complaint is that such "deviance" remains "privatized". It is the recruit who is escaping from the routine world by entering social work whilst failing to see his

56. A further illustration of self-regulation is provided by BASWs suggestion that CCETSW has too few professionally trained social workers and social work educators amongst its membership "to give professional social work considerations due weight" (1979:para.5.3).

57. The latter point has already briefly been mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. There is a small body of literature on the selection of students for social work courses and their professional socialisation. On selection see: Schubert (1963; 1964); Edwards (1971); Ellis (1975); Shaw (1977); Dunlap (1979); and Kleiman and Lounsbury (1978). On professional socialisation see: Ryle and Breen (1974); Pearson (1973; 1974; 1975b). For a prediction study of success on a social work course see Hack (1973) and for a study of the assessment of student performance see Morrell (1980).

own feelings of alienation as a "public ill". Both in this paper (1973:224) and elsewhere (1974:46, 1975b:22), Pearson has endorsed the sociological and psychological acceptance of the phenomenon of professional socialisation. Pearson's brand of methodological individualism suggests that social work ideology denies existence to the essentially political nature of social work. Those who retain a radical nature are left to express it through minor rule-breaking ("industrial deviance", 1975b:24 et seq.).

Radical discourse, then, has a great deal to say about the way in which traditional social work separates theory and practice; the personal and the political; the individual and society; and the relationship between this fact and the imperative of self-interest and individualism under 'capitalism'. And yet that very critique works through the same form of analysis based on the essentialist belief that social work is fundamentally a critique of the relations of 'capitalist' production. Selection for social work training is used "to weed out potential deviants" (Cannan, 1972:249), whilst those who express radical views during training are 'social worked' by tutors who treat criticism as 'acting out' (Cannan, 1972:250), or as 'immaturity' (Pearson, 1973:224). (58) Whilst traditional social work is said to

58. Simpkin summarises the view thus: "Pearson rightly suggests that the choice of a social work career is a public statement not just about internal drives but about a desired relationship with the world ... Entry into the profession is often accompanied by a revulsion at existing social priorities and a desire to work for change. However, the individual focus of traditional social work ideology and training sabotages that desire by eradicating the social context and purpose of its expression. This ... is the first step towards subjection to professional culture and control" (1979:74).

endorse contradictory principles through valuing client self-determination and defining client behaviour as irrational, radical social work is concerned with "the problem of overcoming bias and reaching a true understanding, that is, consciousness ..." (Cannan, 1972:253-4). For one faulty psyche is substituted a faulty consciousness. Traditional social work, of course, is blamed for playing a part in maintaining this false consciousness, although Cannan absolves social workers from blame because they "don't consciously set out to do this" (ibid.:256). They too suffer false consciousness. What we witness, then, in these statements is much more the kind of orientation described by Simpkin as libertarian radicalism. It is a radicalism which glorifies the 'working class' as the embodiment of socialism and which seeks to bask in that glory through a tenuous association between the exploited 'working class' and the exploited, de-skilled, proletarianised basic grade local authority social worker. It is a radicalism which demands a new form of self-regulation for the basic grade social worker, free from hierarchical supervision whose "real purpose is simply work-supervision to ensure that the agency's priorities and responsibilities are carried out" (Simpkin, 1979:84). It is a radicalism which glorifies the power of the collectivity, often, it seems, any collectivity. But in arguing for "the decentralizing and democratizing of team work ... to ... counteract hierarchical structures ...", writers such as Bailey and Brake (1980:20-1) fail to tackle the issues involved concerning the accountability of such a team, not just to the clients with whom association is always postulated, but more generally.

Radical social workers, as socialists, turn to Marxist analyses of capitalist relations of production to find a theoretical basis for their practice. But their practice is not concerned with the fundamental concepts of Marxism: social formation; relations of production; means of production; and so on. What social work radicals turn to is a 'Marxist sociology' which confronts consensus theories with a so-called conflict theory. In effect, social work radicals never reach the point of questioning the epistemological and ontological presumptions which underpin all such sociologies. For example, given the eclecticism of the science of welfare and social work technology, Peter Righton finds little difficulty in providing models for social work course curricula which can reflect the ideological positions of their designers along a continuum from conservative to radical (1979:66). The radical position can, consequently, be delineated by the goals of the radical ("preference for social change") and the methods adopted (innovation; "mobilisation of self-help"; "consciousness-raising"; "collective action"; etc.) (ibid.). 'Marxist sociology', then, joins the growing repertoire of social sciences which forms the knowledge base of social work discourse. As Simpkin says: "We draw on an immensely wide variety of sources; there is hardly a human science which is not in some way relevant" (1979:121. *Emphasis added*). In effect, the knowledge is neutral: "What is unique in social work is not our knowledge but our praxis ..." (ibid.). Consequently: "There is a place for social work techniques traditionally used, such as casework, group work or community work, but these need to be used by a social worker who has analysed his/her relation to the State and has developed

some form of political understanding of his/her role" (Bailey and Brake, 1980:18-9). It is the consciousness of the worker which generates radical practice. The emphasis is clearly upon radical social workers, not radical social work. Socialism, as a "political framework ... can be used to sensitize the social worker ..." "This means that traditional techniques such as casework ... and such traditional humanistic concepts as the autonomy of the client, are given a new meaning and a new dimension when affiliated to a radical socialist perspective" (ibid.:23). Not surprisingly, then, Leonard's "Paradigm for Radical Practice" utilizes Parsonian systems theory, the highly popular unified models of social work constructed by Pincus and Minahan and by Goldstein and consciousness raising. To these, Leonard simply adds the word 'radical' (1975:48, 51, 55).

(ii) Radical Practice. It has been argued at various points in this thesis that theoretical protocols cannot be allowed to subsume the effectivity of a discourse. There is, then, some obligation to examine what radical social workers achieve in their practice. That radical social workers do not take for granted that their personal political orientation can be translated into their social work practice receives confirmation from the title of Brake's and Bailey's text - Radical Social Work and Practice. "We have", note Bailey and Brake, "to translate our theories of society into a practice that at once helps and assists the victims of our system, and simultaneously, contributes to the creation of conditions which will transform that society into a socialist democracy" (1980:12-3). They seem, therefore, to suggest two different activities: helping clients (social work); and political practice.

Two questions might be asked of such aims: first, does "simultaneously" imply that the act of helping is also a political act (undoubtedly, this is the thrust of most radical social work discourse); secondly, what conditions are to be 'transformed', those associated with the calculation and meeting of the client's needs or those conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production which are said to cause these needs? Some attempt will be made to illuminate the issues around these questions by examining radical practices, mainly as they are described by contributors to Brake and Bailey (1980).

Bailey's and Brake's opening essay provides a categorisation of radical practice based upon a dichotomy of activism - "collective action and individual practice" (1980:19). Collective action can be realised, first, through team work and the involvement of client groups in the discussion of policy and needs; secondly, through social service trade unionism; thirdly, through involvement with radical groups outside social work (feminist and 'gay' groups); and finally, through welfare rights and advocacy. Individual practice is, however, less clearly delineated. It acknowledges the ever present individual need for help which is the daily routine of social work practice. It is here that Bailey and Brake endorse "traditional techniques" (1980:23); acknowledge the client's perspective; and find it "essential to work through people's feelings of depression, aggression or despair" in order that they might be given "a wider understanding of self and of society" and a chance "to become whole enough so that they can engage in struggle against their situation" (ibid.:24). Social work, then, is the first-aid centre on

the battlefield of socialist conflict.

The remainder of this section will examine some of these arenas of radical practice in some detail. First, the team collective. Bailey and Brake describe enthusiastically a community-based team in which workers know the area "rather in the way of the old 'patch system'" and have an "intimate knowledge of community resources" including voluntary workers, clergy and trade union organisations. This was, of course, the image of the community-based personal social service advocated in the Seeborn Report (para.583 et seq.). Bennett (1980) describes the creation of one such sub-office and the impact it was able to have on the community it served. It is clear that the team worked hard to achieve a collective approach to practice and to provide a comprehensive service. Nothing in the essay makes it clear what the individual or collective political ideologies were and much of the work described - a pensioners' club; youth club; close contact with a variety of agencies and organisations - would not look out of place in the workload of a police community involvement branch. Other aspects would have looked out of place - provision of a day centre for homeless families; the facilitation of communication between residents and council departments - but such work does not appear to move beyond the definition of appropriate duties likely to be found in most social service/work departments. Given a commendable dedication to their work, the members of the team described by Bennett (their team leader) clearly managed to initiate a range of self-help community projects as well as carrying caseloads requiring intensive casework and fulfilling statutory duties. One is left with the feeling that 'radical {work}' was initiated despite having to do social work.

Extreme effort and the avoidance of 'unnecessary' conflict with the hierarchy of the social service department produced a level of respect for the skills developed within the team such that Bennett is able to describe certain areas in which the team was able to influence departmental policy. As Simpkin puts it: "In order to persuade officials of one's worth, it may be important to consider what can be done for them" (1979:142).

The team collective is seen as an essential medium for radical practice (Bailey and Brake, 1980:19; Bolger et al., 1981:79-80). For those such as Bolger and his co-authors, emphasis is placed on the dynamic qualities of the collectivity. We are treated to an idealism which is reminiscent of Durkheim's views on the power of the collective effervescence engendered by religious gatherings. Bailey and Brake, "ideally", want to see "de-hierarchized" teams. What has to be noted about Bennett's sub-office is that its creation depended upon the agreement of the local authority's social services committee and its continued existence, presumably, depended upon maintaining the committee's general support for the principle. The organisation of a community-based social work service on the principle of small, sub-offices has to be argued for on the basis of its effectiveness in meeting needs in the community being served. This is a matter requiring consultation and negotiation between social work agencies, the social service committee and residents' groups, not an "anti-management stance" (Clarke, 1979:131).

Closely associated with the team's collective activism is the belief that active involvement in a union is a medium for the expression of social work radicalism. The "rise of trade unionism provides some form of

common collective experience ... which greatly assists the possibility of team work", argue Bolger et al (1981:80). The Seeborn reforms and the rapid expansion of social services have meant an increased bureaucratisation and centralisation of services. Increasing control by managers means, suggest Bolger et al., a reduction in social worker autonomy which, in consort with 'deskilling', produces a situation for social workers similar to that experienced by labour within 'capitalist' production (1981:65-6). This results, they argue, in a split in social work between mental (management) and manual (social work) labour. That such a split has theoretical and practical consequences is endorsed by Simpkin who argues that managers "represent a different interest" (1979:117). For most radical social workers, this process is accepted as a process of proletarianisation of social workers: social workers, they believe, can now experience a 'working class consciousness'. To have and to retain this consciousness, social workers must also obtain a "trade union consciousness" (Bailey and Brake, 1980:19). For Bolger and his colleagues the important factors in this process, which they believe has received a boost from the social work national strike of 1978-9, are that social workers identify with the "working-class movement" as a whole against management and that their collective knowledge of social services puts them in a position to organise services themselves (1981:77).

Several comments can be made about this kind of formulation. As has already been argued in Chapter 3, ontological privileging of productive labour is an essentialism which must be rejected. The effectivity of collective action by welfare employees cannot be ascertained through a

subjectivist reductionism which locates the essence of that action within a consciousness, 'working class' or otherwise. Having rejected traditional Marxist 'laws of tendency' in that chapter, it is not intended to repeat the critique of class consciousness and the thesis that class interests are represented by agencies in the labour movement. It should be obvious, however, that if the Marxist distinction between productive and unproductive labour is to be rejected then any argument which utilizes that distinction to theorise an antagonistic relationship between social work managers and social workers (59) must be seriously questioned. The conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production determine the separation of direct producers from the possession of, and effective control over, the means of production. The provision of welfare services in Britain is largely removed from the commodity form of production and distribution, and it is, therefore, vacuous to apply a Marxist analysis based upon the concepts of relations of production and economic class relations. This is not to suggest that writers such as Bolger et al do not draw attention to areas which are valid arenas for socialist efforts to increase democratic control and accountability. Clearly the assessment of welfare needs and its provision are processes which demand greater consultation with those who fund them through rent and rate payments and those who are defined as 'clients' and they are processes which require control and scrutiny over the determination of priorities and spending. But it must be recognised that management

59. Discussing the kind of theory appropriate to her image of social work, Garrett writes: "Clearly for me it must be a class theory - one that recognizes the deep divisions between those who own/manage and those who produce/service ..." (1980:204-5).

through social worker collectives (teams; shop stewards; unions) on the basis that they represent the interests of the 'working class' and, therefore, clients is not, per se, more democratic or socialist.

Trade unions are agencies with specific conditions of existence. Both managers and social workers are employees of the local authority through, for example, the powers vested in the local authority and its social work committee by the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968. As an employer, the local authority has statutory rights over employees; the right to discipline or terminate employment within certain legal parameters, for example. The employer also has certain legal duties concerning conditions of employment. Trade unions have their conditions of existence within this matrix of rights and duties of the employer and within their own rights and duties, defined in law. Managers often have their own union or professional association but there is no inherent reason why managers and 'others' should belong to different unions. (60) In her essay, Garrett provides examples of the ways in which her union has been able to negotiate with managers and "expose" their "lack of caring" and "upside-down priorities" (1980:211). Given that Garrett's ambition that all social service workers achieve

60. See Hugman's discussion of the tendency towards such fragmentation in the Probation Service. "'Management' have much to answer for in the increasing alienation and conflict within the service, but we may be contributing to the worsening of those processes if we simply confirm the distance and difference by destroying the collectivity of the whole service" (1980:139). Hugman's fellow contributor to Brake and Bailey, Garrett, is not likely to agree. For her, management can never be trusted or relied upon. She seems unwilling to acknowledge that if social workers have managers 'holding them back', managers have social work/services committees 'holding them back'.

'trade union consciousness' is far from realisation, the superiority in knowledge and caring obtained by her union must be questionable. Representatives of all grades of employees in social services ought to be able to contribute to discussion over spending and priorities and have a role in enforcing the accountability of managers. Aggressive intervention by one union over specific issues cannot be legitimated on the ground that a union represents the best interests of all basic employees, clients and the 'working class'. This is merely the substitution of one arbitrary decision-making procedure by another and has to be seen in the context of traditional trade union action designed to further the interests of its membership. Similarly, union action designed to assist "Troublesome networks of clients out there in the community" must also be recognised as an offer of help to one category of clients which cannot necessarily pretend to embrace the full range of obligations and priorities in relation to all other client groups. (61) The logic of Garrett's views would require client group involvement within the social service unions and presumes a forum in which all groups - managers, unions and clients can negotiate. This is not, on the face of it, a realistic alternative to the bureaucracy condemned by all radical social workers.

This takes the analysis into the third arena for radical practice: involvement with radical alternatives outside social work practice. Given the wide definition of the responsibilities of social work/ services departments, relations with a wide range of organisations is

61. The arbitrariness of Garrett's stance is open to view when she continues: "They may require resources ... which could be interfered with by management. It is a good idea to have some machinery, usually the trade union, to defend them ... in the way that suits them best" (1980:210. Emphases added).

clearly legitimated. The most commonly referred to in radical social work texts are political parties and 'gay' and feminist liberation organisation.

'Sexual politics' has been of interest to those in the welfare field for a number of reasons. Social work has been seen as having something to contribute to the alleviation of problems specifically experienced by homosexuals, either on the ground that the homosexual had personality problems which social workers could help to 'solve' or that homosexuals needed counselling to assist them in accepting their sexual orientation in the same way that the heterosexual accepts his or hers. Many of the clients and most employees working in social services are women. (62) Feminism has attracted attention to the obvious relationship between woman's disadvantaged social and legal status and her status as 'client', as well as to the low status and pay of many female auxiliary workers in the Welfare State. Allied to the homosexual and feminist movements, but with its own genealogy, condemnation of the social and cultural institution of the family has found a relevance in the social work realm. Socialists in the 19th

62. Jeffreys found that almost three-quarters "of those serving in the social welfare field in Bucks in 1960-61 were women". Certain occupations were the exclusive domain of women - health visiting; almoning; home help organisers; home teachers; and occupational therapy. Of 118 district nurses, only two were men (1965:26). Women were, however, a minority in the National Assistance Board; disablement resettlement; the youth service; school attendance work; housing welfare; and probation. Jeffreys also found that 70% of the "main clients" seen by staff in a week were female (ibid.:40). Professional social work is increasingly being seen as a 'suitable occupation' for men although a study of students attending one-year postgraduate university social work courses in 1975/6 found that only 30% were men (1977:119). Statistics for Scottish social work clients (local authorities only) suggest that 54% were female (Social Work Services Group, 1980).

century were ready to condemn 'the family' for its endorsement of individualism and male supremacy and for its role as the medium of transmission of wealth and privilege between the generations. More recently, Althusser's inclusion of the family in his all-embracing ideological state apparatuses and works such as Donzelot's The Policing of Families have reinforced the Marxist conception of the family as the state's mechanism through which the relations of capitalist production are reproduced.

Much of what has been written about 'sexual politics' in radical social work texts appears as a facet of the 'consciousness-raising' process already discussed. A great deal of attention is given to the reinforcement of the 'gay' and the female as a 'whole person'; someone who can contribute to a collective power; someone who has worth in the world. Hart's contribution to Brake and Bailey is largely given over to lengthy excerpts from an interview he held with "Hazel" in which she discusses "her evolution from 'a personal problem' orientation to a political analysis of both her own and her clients' positions as women in this society" (1980:45). It is clear from this account that being a homosexual social worker can lead to work with clients being as much social worker-orientated as client-orientated. (63) A similar comment

63. At one stage, Hazel describes a female client who 'accused' Hazel of being a lesbian. Hazel experienced a personal dilemma because she also described herself as a lesbian. The client began to persistently pester Hazel, making numerous 'phone calls each day. "In the end I think it only got solved when I left the borough, I also moved home and she didn't pursue me ..." concludes Hazel. Unfortunately, the client in question had a predilection for accusing women of being lesbians, according to Hazel's account. 'It only got solved' for Hazel when she left the borough (1980:51-2) and we do not hear whether it ever got solved for the client.

could be made about blind social workers dealing with blind clients and social workers with a history of 'mental illness' dealing with 'mentally ill' clients. The thrust of Hart's summing up is a reaffirmation of the sociological platitude that sexual orientation and the 'normality' of having children and living in families is a cultural artefact and that non-subscription to such values is not a sufficient ground for persecution and negative discrimination in the job market. Lee and Pithers similarly offer a challenge to family life as the only acceptable forum for child-rearing in their discussion of "radical residential child care" (1980).

Undoubtedly, social work with homosexuals and with woman must take into consideration the social, political and legal conditions of existence of such statuses in the same way in which it must when dealing with juveniles, the disabled, the delinquent. Active involvement in sexual politics must be seen for what it is, however. Pressure groups have their own conditions of existence; specific modes of practice; and particular realms and definitions of effectivity. They are not unquestionably democratic in organisation or practice and are neither more nor less socialist than any other group demanding equality of treatment and opportunity. Social work with homosexuals stands as a particular specialism alongside work with the deaf or "social work practice with ethnic minorities" (Husband, 1980). Belief that one demands more attention than the others is a political decision based upon calculation and ideological orientation and certainly not upon an ontological principle that coloured people or women are the quintessential embodiment of 'working class' exploitation. As stated earlier,

emphasising the demands of one specific client or pressure group inevitably results in a relative neglect of other clients.

Individual social workers have to accept that social work has specific conditions of existence, amongst which are the statutory definitions by public laws of its field of responsibilities. Although the general welfare of the community may be at the heart of such legislation this does not provide a carte blanche to individual social workers to define clients and the content of the assistance to be offered. For example, children taken into care by a local authority are not taken entirely out of the ambit of the parents' responsibility. In those cases in which the local authority assumes parental rights and powers, such rights and powers reside with the local authority and not in individual social workers. Those in residential child care cannot claim by fiat the right to use residential child care to provide "alternative experiences which challenge the immutability of present social forms" (Lee and Pithers, 1980:112). ⁽⁶⁴⁾ [Socialism is about providing people with choices and the knowledge on which to make decisions.] A radical social work which bases its practice on a belief in the inherent worth of its political theories to the exclusion of others ("Membership of a party like the National Front is not ... compatible with social work".

64. Lee and Pithers describe ways in which children in care can be provided with such alternatives without running away from the reality they must face on leaving care. "In another home a group of black children have formed themselves into a special association. They spend a lot of time together ... and are involved in what would be called 'consciousness raising' or 'solidarity' groups. They had not heard of such terms until a politically conscious member of staff explained them" (1980:113). We are not told what the political orientation of the member of staff was nor whether the black children were enlightened about other political stances.

"As a Marxist social worker I am prepared to offer personal assistance to anybody ... If I find that person repugnant by temperament or belief I will refer them on" - Simpkin, 1979:151, 150. (65) Emphasis added), contradicts its own ideals of freedom of choice.

(iii) Marxist Theory and Social Work Discourse. In a brief essay outlining the relationship between critical sociology and radical social work, Clarke (1979) makes the interesting suggestion that one way of overcoming the "tension between theory and practice" would be to pose the relationship as between political theory and political practice. A political theory of welfare would allow for the assessment of specific forms of social work action and their consequences, argues Clarke. Specific areas of practice require analysis of their progressive facets and those which ought to be rejected. Political analysis should "identify realistically the limits of particular struggles and areas of action rather than making the assumption that the creation of a radical social work is necessarily the only or final solution to the problem" (1979:136 et seq.). Clarke identifies Corrigan and Leonard (1978) as a move in this direction. It might be presumed that what Clarke wants to see is a move away from critical sociology and into Marxism as a political theory. The main concern of Clarke's essay, in fact, is the tension between academic theory and practical social work as a situation in which theoreticians have failed to produce knowledge that can be

65. Occasionally such arrogance slips through despite the intense purity of concern amongst radicals to fight professionalism within social work which they see as engendering professional autonomy and control over clients. One might well ask by what authority Simpkin would 'refer' his repugnant client 'on'.

applied to particular cases (ibid.:129). Clarke locates the source of the division between theory and practice within the division of labour necessitated by the "capitalist state". What Clarke appears to be asking for is not a radical reappraisal of theory as knowledge but, rather, the adoption of 'theories of the middle range'. (66) Though offering an important critique of the functionalist pessimism of many radical theorists and the voluntarism and libertarian approaches of many radical social workers, Clarke does not question their epistemological protocols.

Throughout this thesis, it has been argued that there are significant areas of continuity between traditional and radical accounts of welfarism in Britain. This is not, however, an ontological argument about the necessary nature of welfare or social work. Webb argues that social work is defined by its dualistic concern for the individual and the environment and that to step outside this rule is to step outside of social work (1981:147). Thus, Marxists who enter the debate within social work must subscribe to the rules which define it (ibid.:153) and, consequently, suffer dilution (ibid.:155). Now although Webb demonstrates a continuity, he seeks to justify his apparent contention that a Marxist social work is not possible, through a determinist definition of social work. What Webb seems to argue is that social work deals with 'capitalism's' problems, Marxism seeks to supersede

66. Which would confirm the location of Clarke firmly within his own discipline of sociology.

'capitalism', therefore an uncompromised Marxism negates social work. In a similar fashion, Bankowski et al (1977) seek to claim a privileged space for Marxist theory on the premise that it subsumes, in this case, the analysis of law and crime. And yet Bankowski et al do not make it clear why they claim Marxism as the superior knowledge form, (67) although they maintain that Marxism works at the level of "essential forms" in opposition to all other epistemologies which operate at the level of "manifest forms" (ibid.:47).

Marxist theory has its own conditions of formation but one cannot claim by fiat that its form and content are thereby determined. There is no essence to Marxism which makes it inappropriate to the analysis of crime or welfare needs. Thus, whilst it is argued that Marxist theorists have adopted analyses which differ little from liberal social sciences, Marxist theoretical protocol does not determine the content of Marxist discourse. This thesis, however, has also challenged the privileging of knowledge claimed by epistemologies, Marxist or otherwise. The question asked - radical social work or radical social workers - has a certain poignancy for there is a decided tendency in radical social work discourse to offer sociological conceptions that many find alien to Marxism. More importantly, however, one must be prepared to challenge Marxism's claim to offer a radical analysis of social relations given its allegiance to the scientific framework within which social sciences generally find their legitimation. The attempt by

67. The authors argue that Marxism specifies its own objects of analysis and that the relationship between these objects and epistemology is internal to Marxist theory. This form of knowledge in which the concrete object world is appropriated in thought has been discussed in Chapter 3, subsection 4.

Marxist theorists to utilize Marxist concepts, formed as a critique of capitalist relations of production and as a political theory, to problematise and theorise about social work and welfare in Britain has been marred by a willingness to accept these concepts as scientific blueprints, as the keys to an understanding of all social relations under 'capitalism'. Following Paul Hirst, it is suggested that such a critique of Marxist 'knowledge' implies that socialists must be:

"... prepared to accept that in questions of sexuality, family forms, methods of training and social control ... conventional Marxism may have little that is positive to say and the classic prescriptions of socialist ideology may be at best irrelevant" (Hirst, 1979:2).

Socialists require a political theory providing general aims and ideals and Marxism has largely supplied that requirement. But this does not imply that theory provides the answers for action. Radical social workers, like their liberal colleagues, constantly seek permission for their practice from a body of guiding theory. (68) Socialists have to accept that they are acting in specific arenas with varying conditions which do not allow, necessarily, for a simple application of Marxist concepts.

68. Corrigan, in a recent article, warns his readers not to demand too much from Marxist theory: "theory cannot be 'completed' without 'practice'". However, Corrigan finds hope in Marxist analysis of contradictions which show him that 'capitalism' is vulnerable: "refuse the unitary experience of defeat and have hope because the working class is still alive and well" (1982:9). Corrigan then turns to the concept of class to suggest that "most social workers and all their clients have only their labour power to sell to keep themselves". This common identity is a source of power and collective understanding which can bring change. Marxism, declares Corrigan is "a practical theory of becoming" (ibid.:10). To theory is added the mysteries of a new "Revelations".

"The means employed in political calculation are not confined to political theory. The means of calculation are conditioned by and involve political apparatuses, practices and struggles and their effects. Theory has no necessary privilege in relation to this complex of means, it is in no sense necessarily primary in the construction of situations of action. Such modes of calculation have conditions of their operation in and are therefore limited by the practices for which they calculate" (Hirst, 1979:3).

Within social work, the area team provides an interesting forum through which to supply a service to specific communities. Ease of access and familiarity might mean a greater willingness from people to come along for advice and assistance. Social workers are also placed in a position to make judgements about needs in the community. A team working for the same ends clearly can get more done than workers practising individually. But such a corporate effort cannot be left to depend upon achieving a shared 'class consciousness', nor can co-operation within the community be expected to accommodate to such an essence. A team leader carries little authority in terms of the hierarchy to be found in social work/services departments and, therefore, influence upon wider policy decisions depends upon workers at the team level producing reasoned and supportable arguments for new priorities and resources. This was the way in which Bennett (1980) operated his sub-office. Little will be achieved by alienating managers according to a banal analogy with 'capitalist owners'. The 'struggle' which socialists talk of is not that of 'guerrilla warfare' with management but, rather, the constant attempt to achieve processes of democratic and accountable decision-making. Far from the "anarchist consciousness" which Garrett (1980:205) finds an essential ingredient

in socialism, socialists in social work must be prepared to fight for, and work within, complex structures guaranteeing greater control and accountability. The struggle against professional insulation from public scrutiny through scientism and claims for professional self-governance must be accompanied by a willingness amongst socialist social workers to abandon the tendency to see radicalism as another method or skill.

If the strength of a trade union can be used to achieve representation on working and study groups which inform policy or if unions can make an impact on decisions by providing information and expertise then clearly the union becomes a medium for exerting socialist influences. But a welfare trade union cannot be presumed to embody socialist principles on the ground that its members are quasi-'working class'.

In a wider context, the union should be seen as a medium through which influence can take effect at a national level. The expertise and information which a large union should be able to call upon places it in a position to influence debate through the Trades Union Council, members of Parliament and the media. This is a clear and traditional area for socialist political calculation and practices which provides opportunities for struggle against capitalist relations of production and distribution. Effectivity does not, however, depend upon the historical destiny of the workers' movement and the enlightened consciousness of its members but upon the calculation of possibilities given the circumstances.

4. Concluding Discussion

This chapter has sought to illustrate what is often described as the 'crisis' in contemporary social work and has suggested that certain features of this 'crisis', for example, the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of social work practice, are facets of the scientistic nature of welfare discourse in the Modern episteme. Radical social workers who criticise traditional social work discourse without rejecting the epistemological protocol upon which such discourse rests offer, it has been suggested, a gestural radicalism which fails to free itself from the continuity of traditional welfare discourse. The adoption of orthodox Marxist theoretical discourse cannot, of itself, induce a 'Marxist social work'.

It has been suggested that the struggle for socialism within the context of the British Welfare State must often be small-scale. The attempt to understand welfare discourse through the untheorised utilization of Marxist concepts is likely to lead to disillusion and sterile political practice. If socialists are to struggle to change attitudes to women, homosexuals, the disabled, and so on then such changes have to be sought in the name of democracy and socialisation rather than in vacuous slogans about 'smashing capitalism'. As Hirst says: "Wage labour and the production of commodities by enterprises for profit are compatible with a wide range of educational systems, management and occupational structures, family forms, etc. Our politics has to be capable of taking account of this" (1979:17). Socialist social workers should, then, direct their energies towards changing the ways in which welfare needs are calculated and met and

should not view such work as merely ameliorative, a strengthening of the monolith of 'capitalism', and subordinate to some wider and amorphous revolutionary cause. "Reforms are not reformist if they create new grounds for struggle and new sources of strength" argues Hirst (ibid.). If one accepts that the situation in Britain is not amenable to revolution then it should be acknowledged that the language of revolution is counter-productive and may simply serve to alienate politically powerful opponents, making them anxious and unco-operative. Simpkin, for example, insists upon describing his position as 'revolutionary' even though his radical social work is an acknowledgement that "... we have to engage in a continual struggle for reform ..." (1979:160). And yet he feels obliged to end with a cryptic call for 'real' change by "... joining with all those who are exploited in an organised mass movement ..." (ibid.).

Moderation of revolutionary posturing is not, however, a call for subterfuge and opportunism. It is an acknowledgement of the existing power structure and the necessity of working through the existing machinery of consultation and influence. This work must depend upon realistic calculations of the gains to be made as worthwhile goals in themselves and not upon the view that they are unhealthy compromises and a distraction from the ultimate goal of revolution. (69)

This thesis has argued, then, that socialists can have an important impact upon the institutions and machinery of the Welfare State but they

69. See Cutler et al (1978:271 et seq.) for a discussion of the "insurrectionism" and "opportunism" of the political left in Britain.

must be prepared to challenge the form and content of the epistemological conditions of formation of existing welfare ideologies. Although radicals have begun to question the technicist content of social work training, for example, they have been, it has been suggested, too prepared to accept the form of knowledge within social work as a science based upon the objective reality of the world. Decisions about welfare needs, and how they are to be met, are made on the basis that they are technical problems to be solved, albeit with a Marxist science, rather than political issues to be struggled over. Such struggle should be based upon calculation of appropriate action in the given circumstances and not upon a programmed acceptance "that capitalism contains within it the seeds of socialism" (Bolger et al., 1981:156).

CHAPTER 8

Socialist Welfare : A Propaedeutic

This thesis has sought to challenge the theoretical and epistemological bases upon which much contemporary social theory rests. Declaring itself to be an enterprise in critical social theory, the thesis has sought to develop socialist theoretical discourse through the analysis of a particular substantive topic, welfare discourse and the policing of idleness. Little attention, of necessity, has been given to the 'current situation', the primary task being seen as the theoretical deconstruction of available liberal and radical discourses and the reconstruction of the central concepts of this discursive regularity. This final and brief chapter will, however, attempt to highlight the form which a socialist discourse on welfare and the policing of idleness might take in order to fracture the existing continuity. (1)

The concept of welfare under socialist relations of production should not be considered as a contradiction of terms. A social formation based upon a completely socialised production and distribution system cannot be presumed to correspond to an industrial communism in which all distinctions between individuals and agents are erased. As Cutler et al counsel, socialists must consider seriously what they mean by communal possession of the means and conditions of production (1977:320). As they show, 'relations of production' presumes some form of separation of direct producers from their (2)

conditions of production. (1)

At various points in this thesis, welfare and social work have been discussed as discourses about the policing of idleness. If socialist ideology and political calculation are to be based upon concepts such as the social formation and relations of production then socialists ought to accept that this implies the definition of concepts such as labour-force and, therefore, necessitates consideration of how the well-being of those who do not or cannot utilize labour-power is to be maintained. Even within the principle of 'from each according to ability, to each according to need' and its implied superseding of a money-based economy and the necessity to provide incentives to work, socialist production and social relations generally will require some form through which 'ability' and 'need' are to be assessed. The well-being of children and the aged, the sick and the disabled has to be ensured, though its form may differ considerably from that adopted in social formations based upon 'capitalist' and 'socialist' production at the moment. But such a system must be policed. The policing of idleness within British feudal relations took the form of a repressive apparatus, that within capitalist relations the form of a science of welfare which has sought to look below the surface to identify the mechanisms which motivate or induce idleness. The science of welfare seeks not to identify dichotomies - the 'good' and the 'bad', the 'normal' and the 'deviant' but, rather, subtle shades of goodness and

1. "... it is necessary to recognise that communal possession always involves definite communal agents of possession and the consequent separation of the labourers from at least some of their conditions of production" (Gutler et al., 1977:322).

nuances of normality. Socialists, it is argued, have to recognise the necessity to police idleness. (2) What must be struggled against are those coercive modes of discourse which Foucault identifies in his discussion of 'the disciplines' and which appear as knowledge-power relations immune from public control and lacking systems of accountability. (4)

Although this thesis has utilized the parameters of Foucault's 'discipline' in its analysis of welfare discourse, it has argued for rejection of their unquestioned relevance to all aspects of social relations and it has also argued that there is no necessary relation between the content of welfare discipline and the conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production. There are features of 'discipline' which cannot simply be discounted as coercive, as a reflection of domination. 'Hierarchical observation', for example, does not have to take a panoptic form. The 'examination' is a requirement of any system of organisation which has responsibilities for deciding the legitimacy of claims on resources and assessing the level or degree of those claims, and the complexity of such an organisation may necessitate a hierarchical arrangement of control and accountability. Judgements have to be made. However, under a socialised and democratised social formation, judgement would be based more on the principles embodied in Habermas' concept of the ideal speech situation

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2. At the most utopian level, socialists talk of the 'withering away of the state'. In paradise: "The establishment of a just society would obviate any need for the profession [social work] as control would not be necessary and the individual could promote his own well-being" (Bitensky, 1978:71). This stance seems less common amongst British commentators.

rather than upon the current practice of "normalizing judgements". (3)
 This is not to argue that expert opinion would be irrelevant but, rather, that it would take its place beside other forms of advice and representation.

If socialists are to affect change within the welfare institutions of Britain they must begin to consider alternative forms of organisation which will be able to cope with the kinds of demands made through conceptions of democracy and socialisation. To close this thesis, some of the issues involved in just such a consideration will be spelled out by looking at an important paper by Paul Hirst - Law, Socialism and Rights (1980).

In his paper, Hirst sets out to illuminate the issues concerning public law, the state and its regulation under socialist relations of production. Socialist states, Hirst emphasises, "... by increasing the scope and variety of state agencies and functions, accentuate rather than reduce the need for an effective framework of public law to regulate the 'public' domain and its relations with other agents" (1980: 77-8). The state is not a single agency of control but a "complex of differentiated agencies of decision" (ibid.:66). The status and regulation of these agencies are set by public law. To argue for the socialisation of relations is to argue for the extension of the public

3. For Habermas, claims to 'truth' "... can ultimately be decided only through critical discussion and not through a direct appeal to sense certainty ..." (McCarthy, 1978:307). The deciding factor becomes 'the force of the better argument' and this presumes a situation free from domination and constraint. There must be a symmetry of opportunity to contribute and to question the contributions of others. As McCarthy observes, "... the symmetry requirements concerning the expressive and the interactive use of speech refer only indirectly to discourse and directly to the organization of interaction ..." (ibid.:306).

sphere: questions of public law, then, should be central to socialist discourse.

In the realm of welfare, public law defines the status and capacities of certain agents such as, perhaps, social security or social work departments, claimants and clients. Apparatuses of adjudication are also defined by law, to deal with disputed claims by claimants for example. Means must also be provided for enforcing the decisions reached by that apparatus (*ibid.*:62). As Hirst notes, the law defines, and sets the limits of power of, the various state agencies but such a condition of existence does not circumscribe their practices and effects. Conceptions of 'sovereignty' as the guardian of legality are, therefore, a fiction and are no guarantee against corruption and the misuse of power. This is so whether the sovereign power is conceived of as a democratically elected parliament or 'the will of the people'. Socialists, then, must give serious consideration to the construction of legal and organisational limits to state and corporate action (*ibid.*:79). Such regulation cannot reside simply in legal and statutory conceptions of individual rights and duties but must reside in the mechanisms of decision and control, in terms of the powers of specific agencies to scrutinise and limit the practices of others.

Within welfare agencies, then, radicals, it is suggested, should abandon notions of popular control by basic grade, proletarianised workers or by clients. Such notions do not constitute the 'withering away' of the state but the substitution of one form by another which ignores the complexity of the co-ordination and decision-making involved.

The technical division of labour is not a 'capitalist' form but a requirement of efficient and effective management. Hirst suggests that socialisation, because it cannot be essentialised as the pure expression of socialist relations of production, socialised property or 'the working class', must lead to an increase in differences of policy line and objectives, and to disputes between bodies of interest within state agencies and between agencies and the public (ibid.:80). To imagine that socialism leads to a reduction of organisational problems because 'capitalist contradictions' have been superseded by a 'working class consciousness' is naive. Team collectives or client pressure groups represent only certain sets of issues and cannot be allowed to dictate policy. Differences of interpretation and emphasis have to be allowed expression but according to certain procedural rules. Disagreements will have to be resolved through the medium of an adjudicative machinery. It is "... only by developing and extending means to permit serious examination of alternatives according to rules of procedure that socialist states can make any claims to advances in political organisation over 'capitalist democracies' ..." (Hirst, 1980: 80).

Now, although this thesis has offered a critique of the science of welfare, it has not denied the necessity for certain agents who must decide upon matters of welfare. Socialism, far from implying a residual role for such agencies and their personnel, will require a greater involvement not only at the level of the work of the agencies themselves but also in matters of national policy. This is not merely a reaffirmation of the function of welfare organisations as pressure

groups but, rather, the suggestion that "enterprises, hospitals, unions, groups of specialists and so on require a presence on legislative bodies" (Hirst, 1980:83).

One of the targets of Hirst's critique of libertarian socialism has been the radical criminologists (1975; 1980:94-5) for whom: "Socialism or communism means, as an ultimate objective, a society without complex differentiated organization, without irreconcilable differences or conflicts" (1980:95). As has been suggested, radical social work displays elements of libertarianism but it tends not to be central to its discourse, appearing rather as a mode of electioneering. Radical social work discourse has concentrated: upon the analysis of the organisation of the Welfare State and its social service agencies; upon offering a critique of traditional theory and practice within social work; and upon suggesting radical alternatives for practice. Almost no attention, however, has been given to exploring the consequences of a radical social work in terms of the organisation of welfare and the policing of idleness under socialist social relations. Bolger and his colleagues, in one of the most recent texts on radicalism in the welfare apparatus, make a number of suggestions for democratising welfare institutions and their machinery. But, as always, these suggestions insist upon such a struggle being a class struggle which must exploit the inherent contradictions of the system. By clinging to the security of the Marxist notion that the 'answers' are available within the structure of 'capitalism', socialists side-step the task of constructing a political theory which tackles questions of how socialised relations are to be organised and governed.

Until radical welfare workers accept the need to begin such a construction they will remain uncertain about their own actions as social workers, for it is only by identifying the nature of the organisation of welfare and the machinery for ensuring its effective control through processes of inspection, consultation and accountability, that socialists can begin to delimit the conditions for construction of socialist welfare.

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